DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 333 298 CG 023 453

AUTHOR Wallack, Lawrence; And Others
TITLE TV Beer Commercials and Children: Exposure, Attention, Beliefs, and Expectations about Drinking as an Adult.
SPONS AGENCY AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 90p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Alcoholic Beverages; *Audience Response; *Childrens Television; Elementary School Students; Grade 5; Grade 6; Intermediate Grades; *Sex Differences; *Television Commercials; Television Research; *Television Viewing
IDENTIFIERS *Beer

ABSTRACT

This report presents findings from a study of the effects of televised beer commercials on fifth and sixth grade children (N=468), aged 10-13 years. Each child was interviewed in-person at his or her home. The findings indicated: (1) most children are frequently exposed to beer commercials on television; (2) children's skepticism of television beer commercials was significantly lower among those with the highest level of attention to the commercials; (3) children's beliefs about social aspects of beer consumption, and ritual aspects regarding beer consumption being cool and macho, were significantly related to their attention to beer commercials; (4) most children had moderate to high expectations to drink as an adult and higher drinking expectations were significantly related to exposure to beer commercials, recognition of commercials, recall of the brands advertised, and beliefs about the positive social and ritual use of beer; (5) boys were much more likely than girls to recognize televized beer commercials and to have positive beliefs about beer consumption; (6) boys were significantly more likely to believe that beer commericals "tell the truth" while girls were more likely to believe that beer advertising "tries to get kids to drink;" and (7) boys were significantly more likely than girls to expect to drink when they become adults. (BHK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED333298

TV BEER COMMERCIALS AND CHILDREN: EXPOSURE, ATTENTION, BELIEFS, AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT DRINKING AS AN ADULT

Lawrence Wallack, DR PH
Diana Cassady, MPH
School of Public Health
University of California, Berkeley

and

Joel Grube PH D
Prevention Research Center
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation
Berkeley, California

CG023453

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

A Report of a Study Funded by the
AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
1730 M Street, NW, Suite 401
Washington, D.C. 20036

Fall 1990

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. Yaksich, Jr.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CG

TV BEER COMMERCIALS AND CHILDREN: EXPOSURE, ATTENTION, BELIEFS, AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT DRINKING AS AN ADULT

Lawrence Wallack, DR PH
Diana Cassady, MPH
School of Public Health
University of California, Berkeley

and

Joel Grube PH D
Prevention Research Center
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation
Berkeley, California

A Report of a Study Funded by the
AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
1730 M Street, NW, Suite 401
Washington, D.C. 20036

Fall 1990

Table of Contents

Executive Summary i

Acknowledgements viii

I. Introduction 1

II. Teenage Drinking 2

III. Advertising 3
- 1. Beer Commercials on Television 4
- 2. Targeting the Youth Market 6
- 3. The Effects of Alcoholic Beverage Advertising on Children 7

IV. Study Overview 10

V. Study Results 11
- 1. Exposure
  - Television Viewing and Children 13
  - A. Weekend Viewing 13
  - B. Sports Programming 15
- 2. Attention
  - Recognition and Recall of Beer Commercials 18
  - A. Recognition of Commercials 18
  - B. Recall of Brands from Commercials 22
  - C. Recognition, recall, and viewing 22
- 3. Attention
  - Slogan Matching and Unaided Brand Recall 25
  - A. Unprompted Knowledge of Beer Brands 25
  - B. Slogan Matching 28
- 4. General Perceptions of Beer Commercials 32
- 5. Beliefs About Beer
  - Social, Heath, Coolness 34
  - A. Beer Beliefs and Attention to Beer Commercials 37
- 6. Expectations about Drinking as an Adult 39

VI. Summary 43

VII. Recommendations 44
- 1. An action plan for parents 46
- 2. An action plan for schools 47
- 3. An action plan for the community 48
- 4. An action plan for the national level 49
- 5. Conclusion 50

Appendix 1—Study Design and Methods

Appendix 2—Selected Sections of the Questionnaire

Appendix 3—Focus Group Study: Summary of Methods and Results

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a study of the effects of televised beer commercials on 5th and 6th grade children; 85 percent of the children were 11 or 12 years old. The primary source of data was a scientific survey of 468 randomly selected children. Each child was interviewed in-person at his or her home. The most important finding of this study is that there is a relationship between exposure and attention to beer advertising on the one hand, and beliefs about the social and ritual aspects of beer consumption, and expectations to drink as an adult, on the other. The results of this study can be briefly summarized as follows:

- Most children are frequently exposed to beer commercials on TV
- Children's ability to recognize commercials and recall the brands advertised is significantly related to their level of exposure through weekend viewing and particularly sports programming
- Children's ability to name brands of beers and match slogans with correct brands is significantly related to their exposure and attention to beer commercials
- Children are highly aware of Spuds Mackenzie, 88% of them being able to link Spuds with Bud Light
- Children's skepticism of TV beer commercials (eg. belief that ads try to get kids to drink) is significantly lower among those with the highest level of attention to the commercials
- Many children are likely to have beliefs about beer consumption that is more in line with a commercial reality (e.g., fun and good times) than a public health reality (e.g., caution and risk)
- Children's beliefs about social aspects of beer consumption, and ritual aspects regarding beer consumption being cool and macho, are significantly related to their attention to beer commercials
- Most children have moderate to high expectations to drink as an adult; higher drinking expectations are significantly related to exposure to beer commercials, recognition of commercials, recall of the brands advertised, and beliefs about the positive social and ritual use of beer.

There were consistent and significant differences between the boys and girls in the sample:

- While boys and girls watch about the same amount to television, boys watch more sports programs, pay closer attention, and enjoy these programs more than girls.

- Boys are much more likely than girls to recognize televised beer commercials; to recall the brands being advertised; to match slogans with beer brands; and to have positive beliefs about beer consumption.

- Boys are significantly more likely to believe that beer commercials "tell the truth" while girls were more likely to believe that beer advertising "tries to get kids to drink."

- Boys are significantly more likely than girls to expected to drink when they become adults.

The key finding -- *expectation to drink as an adult is related to exposure to beer commercials, recognizing commericals, recalling the brands, and beliefs about the social and ritual uses of beer* -- is statistically significant and remarkably consistent as evidenced in a range of relationships studied. Even when the influence of important social-demographic variables such as parents' drinking, gender, and age are considered the relationship is maintained. The implications of this research is that alcohol policy-makers should assume that youth see and are influenced by beer commercials. This research should have considerable value for policy makers, educators, community activists, and the wide range of people concerned with preventing alcohol-related problems in our society.

Exposure

The children watched an average of 15.25 hours of television weekly. They are exposed to alcohol advertising generally through weekend television viewing and more specifically through viewing of sports programs. Approximately 40% of the children watched more than 6.5 hours of television

from noon to bedtime on the weekend and 42% of the sample watched 3 or more sports events on television in the past month. Boys were more than twice as likely as girls to watch at least 3 televised sporting events in the past month.

Those who watch sports events pay very close attention and enjoy the activity. Boys are more than twice as likely as girls to "not miss anything" and almost three times as likely to like watching "a lot". This presents an ideal environment for beer advertising.

Attention: Recognition and Recall

Roughly 70% of the children said they had seen a Bud Light and Coors ad when shown a still photo of a recent television commercial. Other brands were less likely to be recognized and a public service advertisement promoting the "designated driver" was recognized by 16% of the sample. When shown a photo from a Diet Coke commercial 44% said they had seen it, identical to the proportion recognizing a Michelob Dry commercial. One-half of the 10-13 year olds were able to recognize at least 3 of 5 beer commercials and 25% were able to recognize at least 4 commercials.

Boys were significantly more likely than girls to recognize beer commercials. Overall, 33% of the boys recognized 4-5 ads compared to 17% of the girls.

Children were easily able to recall the specific brand of beer being advertised in the commercial. Overall, 59% of the children recalled at least 2 brands of beer advertised. Boys were significantly more likely than girls to recall brands. Boys were twice as likely as girls (41% vs 19%) to correctly recall at least 3 of the brands being advertised.

Recognition and correct recall were significantly associated with both hours of weekend TV viewing and number of sports programs viewed in the last month. Only 17% of those seeing no televised sports events in the previous

month could correctly recall 3 or more brands advertised in the commercial compared to 35% of those seeing at least 3 sports programs.

Attention: General Knowledge of Brands and Slogans

Virtually all of the children were able to name at least 1 brand of beer in response to an open-ended question prior to being asked about any specific brands advertised in the commercials. Approximately two-thirds of the children were able to name at least three brands.

Boys were significantly more likely than girls to be able to name brands. Boys were almost 2.5 times more likely than girls to list 4-5 brands (46% vs 20%).

Children were presented with 5 beer slogans and 1 soft drink slogan and asked to identify the brand. Remarkably, 88% were able to match "Spuds Mackenzie: The Original Party Animal" with Bud Light This was more than twice as high as any other slogan and almost 9 times the proportion that matched the Coca Cola slogan. The next highest beer slogan, "Tastes Great, Less Filling" was successfully matched by 33% of the children.

Boys were significantly more likely than girls to correctly identify the brand to go with the slogan. Overall, 15% percent of the boys were able to match at least 3 of the slogans compared to 5% of the girls -- a three-fold difference.

Unprompted knowledge of brand names and slogan identification were significantly associated with higher levels of sports program viewing, recognition of beer commercials, and recall of brands in the beer commercial. For example, 52% of those who recognized none or 1 beer commercial could name 3+ brands of beer compared to 71% of those who recognized at least 3 commercials. Also, 53% of those who recognized 3 or more commercials were

able to correctly match at least 2 slogans with the right brand compared to only 26% of those recognizing none or only 1 commercial.

Perceptions of beer commercials

A substantial proportion of children appear generally trusting of beer commercials. Surprisingly, 28% of children believe beer commercials, "tell the truth", and 49% do not think that beer commercials make drinking "seem better than it really is." When asked if beer advertising, "tries to get kids to drink," 44% of the children thought this statement was true. While boys and girls do not differ on their perception of commercials enhancing drinking, boys are more likely to think that beer commercials "tell the truth" and less likely to think beer advertising "tries to get kids to drink". Boys are more likely than girls to be exposed to beer commercials, to know brands and slogans, but less likely to be skeptical about what they are seeing.

Perceptions about the truthfulness of beer commercials and whether advertising tries to recruit kids are significantly related to the number of commercials children see and recalling the brands advertised in the commercial. For example, 23% of children who recognize none or 1 beer commercial think that these commercials "tell the truth" compared to 39% of those who recognize 3 or more commercials. On the recruitment question, 48% of those recalling none or 1 brand from commercials think advertising does not try to get kids to drink compared to 62% of those able to recall 3 or more brands.

Beliefs about Beer

Three scales were developed from a series of 20 items to assess children's belief about beer on three dimensions. The first dimension focused the role of beer in social facilitation and addressed beliefs about using beer to relax, get to know people, and generally "unwind." The second dimension focused on health aspects and addressed beliefs about risks associated with

alcohol use. The third dimension focused on the ritual use of beer as a way of being cool or macho.

A substantial minority (30-38%) scored in the high end of each of the scales. Boys were more likely than girls to hold beliefs that beer facilitated social interaction, but both registered similar beliefs on the other two scales.

Scores on two of the three scales were significantly related to attention variables. The social scale was significantly related to number of television commercials recognized and brands correctly recalled. Those who recognized at least three commercials were more than 3 times as likely to score in the highest category of the social scale compared to those recognizing none or 1 commercial (43% vs 15%).

The scale assessing beliefs about the ritual use of beer was significantly associated with recognition and brands correctly recalled. Thirty-two percent of those correctly recalling none or 1 brand scored at the high end of this scale compared to 46% of those recalling 3 or more brands.

Health beliefs showed no apparent relation to attention variables. Those with high and low levels of attention to beer commercials did not differ in their health beliefs.

Expectations about Drinking as an Adult

Slightly more than two-thirds of the 10-13 year olds expressed a moderate to high expectation to drink as adults. Boys were significantly more likely than girls to have a high expectation about drinking when they become adults (38% vs 24%).

Expectation to drink as an adult was significantly associated with exposure and attention variables. Those watching no sports programs were less likely to have a high expectation about drinking (25%) than were those who watched 3 or more sports events (39%). Among those who could recall none or

1 brand of beer from television commercials 22% expressed a strong expectation to drink as an adult compared to 41% of those correctly recalling 3 or more advertised beer brands.

Expectation to drink was also significantly associated with higher scores on the social aspects and ritual aspects scales. Of those scoring at the low end of the social scale 20% had a high expectation to drink as an adult while 46% of those at the top end of the scale expressed a high expectation of future drinking. There was no apparent relationship between expectations and the health belief scale.

Conclusion

Alcohol is America's number 1 drug and children are widely exposed to pervasive, attractive promotions for beer. The attention and apparent response of 10-13 year old elementary school children to beer commercials, as reported in this study, is striking and should be of great concern to all those concerned with public health issues. The argument about whether beer advertising is intentionally directed at underage youth is not relevant. The reality, ***regardless of intent,*** is that children are widely exposed to these ads, apparently learn from them, and develop expectations about their likelihood of future drinking based, in part, on these commercials. This has serious implications for every organization, group and person concerned with the welfare of children and the prevention of alcohol-related problems. The development of public health-oriented alcohol policies to address this issue should have a high priority.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their appreciation to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety for funding this study. Our special thanks go to the Foundation's Executive Director, Sam Yaksich, Jr.

The AAA study questions were added to a larger survey directed by Dr. Joel Grube of the Prevention Research Center in Berkeley, California. This survey was funded by a National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism grant (#AA06282). Patricia Madden of PRC provided consultation on questionnaire design and fieldwork issues and made significant contributions to this study.

The fieldwork was carefully and expertly conducted by the Survey Research Center, University of California, Berkeley.

Dr. Charles Atkin of Michigan State University has been a general consultant to the project and provided excellent comments throughout the course of this study. His previous work in this area has been of great value.

Dr. Byron Reeves of Stanford University provided expert consultation on ways to assess television exposure and the impact of advertising on children.

This report was mostly produced while the senior author was on sabbatical at the Oregon Research Institute in Eugene. I am very grateful to have had such a collegial environment in which to work and extend my sincere appreciation to the wonderful people at ORI.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to each of the 468 children who participated in this study and their parents who provided their permission.

I. Introduction

Young people growing up in American draw on many sources of information in making decisions about important life issues. Decisions about whether and how to use alcoholic beverages are influenced by family, friends, school, church and television. For far too many teenagers these decisions have significant, sometimes fatal, consequences. This report explores the role that beer advertising on television plays in the development of beliefs and perceptions of 10 to 13 year old boys and girls in the 5th and 6th grades -- 85 percent of the children being 11 or 12 years old.

Television is a constant companion for America's youth. Children watch approximately 22 hours of television per week and extensive research makes it clear that significant learning results.[1,2] From early childhood through high school, television viewing consumes more time than any single activity except sleeping. Children use television to learn about aspects of life that they have yet to experience. In some ways television has altered the parents' ability to regulate the speed with which their children are exposed to adult issues.[3]

Television educates children about a range of health and social issues and provides both intended and unintended instruction about alcohol. Some of the learning about alcohol may be positive as is the case with special movies and programs addressing alcohol problems of teens. On the other hand, television often glamorizes the use of alcohol and presents such behavior in a non-problematic way. This sometimes happens through prime-time programming. However, the most direct and concentrated education about alcohol is in beer commercials.

The research presented here builds on the work of several social scientists and scholars who have turned their attention to the effects of alcoholic beverage advertising on knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of various groups.

Generally, this study attempts to test out some findings of Neil Postman and his colleagues reported in Myths, Men and Beer.[4] Their results suggest that beer commercials convey a set of specific myths about the social and ritual use of beer among males. For example, beer commercials are populated almost exclusively by men and beer consumption is linked to a limited view of masculinity focused on risk-taking, domination of nature, the subservient role of women, initiation rites, and physical labor. According to Postman and his colleagues, these myths represent substantial misinformation or "miseducation" about the use of beer in American society. The promotion of these and other myths related to beer consumption have important implications for education, prevention and treatment programs regarding alcohol-related problems.

II. Teenage Drinking

Alcohol is the number 1 drug of choice for America's youth, and beer is the preferred beverage.[5] Alcohol is the drug most commonly used and the one that causes the most trouble for the most people. Children and teens are affected in two specific ways. First, children in alcoholic families are extremely vulnerable and subject to various physical, psychological and social trauma. Second, drinking by teenagers is a source of considerable problems -- particularly when combined with driving.

Drinking rates among teens are a relatively stable phenomena. Almost all other drug use has steadily declined since the late 1970s, but alcohol (and tobacco) use has remained fairly constant. The most recent evidence suggests that some declines among high school seniors may now be occurring. Nonetheless, currently 9 of 10 high school seniors have tried alcohol and approximately 60% report drinking in the past month.[6]

Heavy drinking is surprisingly common among teens. About one-third of

high school seniors report drinking 5 or more drinks in one sitting at least once in the past two weeks.[7] Young people also begin to drink long before they reach the legal age of 21 years: 55% of high school seniors started to drink in the ninth grade or earlier.[8]

Many younger teenagers report heavier drinking. A recent survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control found that a quarter of 8th graders and more than one-third of 10 graders reported drinking 5 or more drinks on one occasion in the past two weeks. In the same survey approximately 30% of 8th graders and almost one-half of 10th graders said they had ridden during the past month with a driver who had just used alcohol or other drugs.[9]

Heavy drinking and earlier initiation of drinking combines with other factors to be a recipe for disaster among youth and a tragedy for their families and the larger community. Nine of 10 teenage car crashes involve alcohol.[10] Drinking and driving is the leading cause of death for youth aged 15-24 and, according to former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, more than 8000 youth die in alcohol-related crashes every year and thousands more are injured.[11]

III. Advertising

Over one half of all money spent on advertising in the world is spent in the United States. On the average, $451 is spent per person, per year -- at least double the level in any other part of the world.[12] Advertising is used to get the consumers' attention and cultivate positive feelings toward a product. It emphasizes the emotional rather than the rational, focuses exclusively on positive product attributes, links esteemed values to product use, and implicitly promises the consumer increased status. It is, in a nutshell, an extremely sophisticated, one-sided pitch designed to get the consumer to use a product.

Advertising does not work alone. It is part of a comprehensive marketing process that includes the "4 ps": the right product at the right price in the right place with the right promotion. For example, beer marketers often price the product so that it is competitive with soft drinks, make sure that it is widely available both physically and socially, extensively promote it through mass media, point of purchase, and local events, and develop new products (eg. dry beer, light beer) to attract new consumers. The effect of advertising ultimately must be considered in this broader context of comprehensive marketing.[13]

The level of advertising and promotion of alcoholic beverages is overwhelming. Every year the alcoholic beverage industry spends approximately $2 billion to promote their product[14] -- a product linked with over 100,000 deaths in the United States each year or almost 300 deaths each day.[15] This amounts to roughly $5.5 million dollars a day or almost a quarter of a million dollars every hour. Beer promotion accounts for about one-half of these expenditures.

Beer advertising is a kind of entry level education for youth about the uses and gratifications of the product. Positive images are used to consistently link highly desirable traits to product use and reinforce the association.[16] The avalanche of positive images systematically minimizes or ignores legitimate concerns about the adverse health and safety consequences of beer consumption.

1. Beer Commercials on Television

The bulk of beer advertising occurs on television. In 1988, brewers spent almost $700 million to advertise on network television.[17] In the first 9 months of 1989 Anheuser Busch spent more than $220 million to advertise its product through major media. Most of this money was spent on television.[18] Sports

events, popular with males of all ages, are the prime environment for televised beer commercials.

Fast moving, attractive television advertising has become more important as competition among brewers has intensified. The purchase of Miller Brewing Company by cash heavy cigarette producer Philip Morris forever changed the landscape of beer advertising. Miller, fed by the large cash reserves and sophisticated marketing strategies of Philip Morris, was the first to use exciting types of lifestyle ads to sell beer. Sales pitches focused more on the characteristics of a desired lifestyle or role model than characteristics of the beverage. A Miller vice president recalled, "We knew how to translate our products into media in a way that made the consumer feel good about himself when he bought them."[19] Miller's overall strategy was successful. Within a decade Miller went from the 7th to the 2nd largest beer producer.[20]

Television continues to be the battleground for the major brewers and sports is the place where strategies are played out. The 18-29 age group contains the largest proportion of beer drinkers and is a highly attractive market for the industry. The age and sex characteristics of the beer market are consistent with those of sports fans. Therefore, sponsorship of sports programs on television and in the community are keys to advertising, "TV sports and beer commercials is a perfect marriage."[21] Both parties benefit considerably with the beer industry picking up a tab for hundreds of millions of dollars.

Brewers are pouring money into cable as well as network television. In 1987 brewers spent approximately $31.5 million advertising on cable. Anheuser Busch, the largest brewer and television advertiser, has an exclusive arrangement with ESPN, the leading cable sports channel.[22] A sense of the relationship between sports and the beer companies can be seen in the

broadcast sponsorship activities of Anheuser-Busch in 1988. In that year they sponsored 23 of 24 domestic major league baseball teams, 18 of the 28 teams in the National Football League, 22 of 23 National Basketball Association teams and 13 of 14 National Hockey League franchises.[23]

2. Targeting the Youth Market

Young people drink a lot of beer and are an attractive market for the beer industry. College students spend $2-3 billion on beer each year: this amounts to almost 1/3 of their discretionary spending.[24,25] The brewers feel no hesitation in targeting this market. One Miller executive noted, "We continue to feel that the college market is an extremely important one and marketing efforts targeted to legal drinking age groups are both important and appropriate."[26]

The college market is especially important because market research indicates that brand loyalty to specific beers develops between the ages of 18 - 24. If the brewers can develop loyalty to their brand they are on the way to having a lifelong consumer. Unfortunately, in casting a large net to attract those just at or above the legal age, advertisers reach millions of teenagers. For example, more than one-half of the undergraduates at the University of California are under the legal drinking age.[27]

Many other advertising and promotional activities end up with substantial underage audiences. In 1984, Miller sponsored 3000 rock concerts and recently their Genuine Draft brand sponsored the much publicized tour of the WHO[28] and in 1989, Anheuser-Busch sponsored the Rolling Stones concert tour.

Beer commercials on television are frequently seen by children and youth. In 1977, CBS estimated that the audience for the average football game included 1.9 million children and another 1.7 million teenagers. NBC estimated

that for the average sporting event the audience included 1 million children and 900,000 teenagers.[29] A recent study conducted by the Washington based consumer group, Center for Science in the Public Interest, found that teenage boys named beer commercials as their favorite commercials with fast food ads coming in second.[30] Even though beer ads might not be specifically targeted toward young boys it seems clear that they have considerable appeal to this vulnerable group.

3. The Effects of Alcoholic Beverage Advertising on Children

There have been very few studies that address the impact of televised alcoholic beverage advertising on children. Before turning to these studies it would be informative to set a larger context for thinking about children and television.

Aimee Dorr, in her recent book, Television and Children,[31] explains that children, like adults, "construct meaning from media." For example, advertisers may construct a specific message for viewers, but each viewer uses his or her own experience, feeling and opinions to make sense of the message. The final meaning of the message may be determined by the individual viewer, as much as by the advertiser. Because children are developing their intellectual and interpretive skills, they will interpret the media messages very differently than adults who are more fully developed. Dorr argues that children are a special audience and different from adult viewers in several ways:

- Children may misunderstand what they see on television because of their lack of experience
- Children may accept television content as true when adult viewers are able to critically judge program content
- Children use television to learn how adults behave.

This has significant implications for children who are exposed to beer commercials. In the child's search to learn about adult behavior, beer commercials may be important source of information. Relying on beer commercials to learn about adult drinking would lead to inaccurate conclusions. For example, beer commercials suggest all Americans drink beer, that all beer drinkers are young and attractive, and that drinking beer is exclusively associated with good friends and good times. These inaccuracies may be obvious to adult viewers but children do not have the life experience to critically assess the commercials. Even adult viewers are influenced by commercials that are clearly untrue on an intellectual level but appealing on an emotional level. In fact, children may be especially attentive to commercials as they learn about adulthood.

There is a great deal of controversy regarding the effects of alcoholic beverage advertising. On the one hand, alcoholic beverage advertisers argue that the only effect of advertising is to get existing consumers to shift brands and scientists differ in their interpretation of the data. On the other hand, public health professionals find the existing evidence makes a compelling case for action.

For such an important issue there has been surprisingly few studies of the effects of alcoholic beverage advertising on youth. The work of Charles Atkin and his colleagues in the Department of Communication at Michigan State University is the key research in this area[32,33,34,35]. This research was a critical part of the foundation for then Surgeon General Koop's recommendations on alcoholic beverage advertising and for other public policy initiatives. The research by Atkin's group regarding advertising and teenagers (12 years and older) has produced a number of major findings:

•Advertising is a major source of socialization for youth regarding alcoholic beverages.

•Higher levels of exposure to advertising are associated with increased brand awareness, more positive images of beer drinkers, and greater awareness of slogans and symbols

•Higher levels of exposure to alcoholic beverage advertising is associated with increased consumption of alcoholic beverages.

•For non-drinkers the level of exposure to alcoholic beverage advertising is associated with intention to be a future drinker.

•Exposure to advertising is related to drinking by teens in high risk situations.

A study by Strickland examined advertising exposure, alcohol consumption and misuse among a group of adolescent drinkers in the 7th, 9th and 11th grades.[36] Key findings include:

•For adolescent drinkers there is a small, statistically significant relationship between exposure to advertising and alcohol consumption.

•Peer association and other social processes were shown to have a much greater impact on consumption.

A pilot study by Neuendorf of 100 children aged 10-14 assessed opinions about beer and wine commercials.[37] Some of the key findings include:

•When asked to name their favorite television commercials, 20% of the children named a beer or wine commercial.

•The most commonly reported reason why children liked beer or wine commercials was humor. The second most common reason was the presence of a famous person (eg. Rodney Dangerfield, sports stars).

Children who were heavy television viewers were more likely to think that "all people who drink are happy" and "you have to drink to have fun at a sporting event."

The most recent research on this topic has been done by a group in Scotland.[38] Several important findings have emerged from their studies of youth aged 10 - 17.

- 83 percent of the children reported seeing 4 or more alcoholic beverage commercials on television.
- Children are much more aware and appreciative of alcohol advertising than adults realize.
- Children of 10 and above appear to like and be particularly appreciative of television advertisements for mass produced lagers.
- Underage drinkers pay more attention to and express greater appreciation of alcohol commercials than non drinkers.
- Televised alcohol commercials aimed at older teenagers and young adults present qualities that younger teenagers also find attractive.
- Televised alcohol commercials reinforce underage drinking.

In sum, the research on the effects of alcoholic beverage advertising on youth is very limited. However, in a comprehensive review prepared for the United States Surgeon General, Atkin concluded that, "the preponderance of the evidence indicates that alcohol advertising stimulates higher consumption of alcohol by both adults and adolescents."[39] Beer advertising, in particular, appears to contribute to an overall context that facilitates drinking.

IV. Study Overview

The present study examines the relationship among a number of key variables related to televised beer commercials, children, beliefs about social and health aspects of alcohol, and intention to drink as an adult. In-person interviews were conducted with a probability sample of 468 5th and 6th graders from a suburban school district in Northern California. A description of the study methods and characteristics of the sample can be found in Appendix 1 and relevant parts of the questionnaire are in Appendix 2. In addition, a separate

study involving a series of eight discussion groups with children from other school districts were conducted to obtain qualitative data regarding children's responses to televised beer commercials. The results from this study have been reported elsewhere[40] and are summarized in Appendix 3.

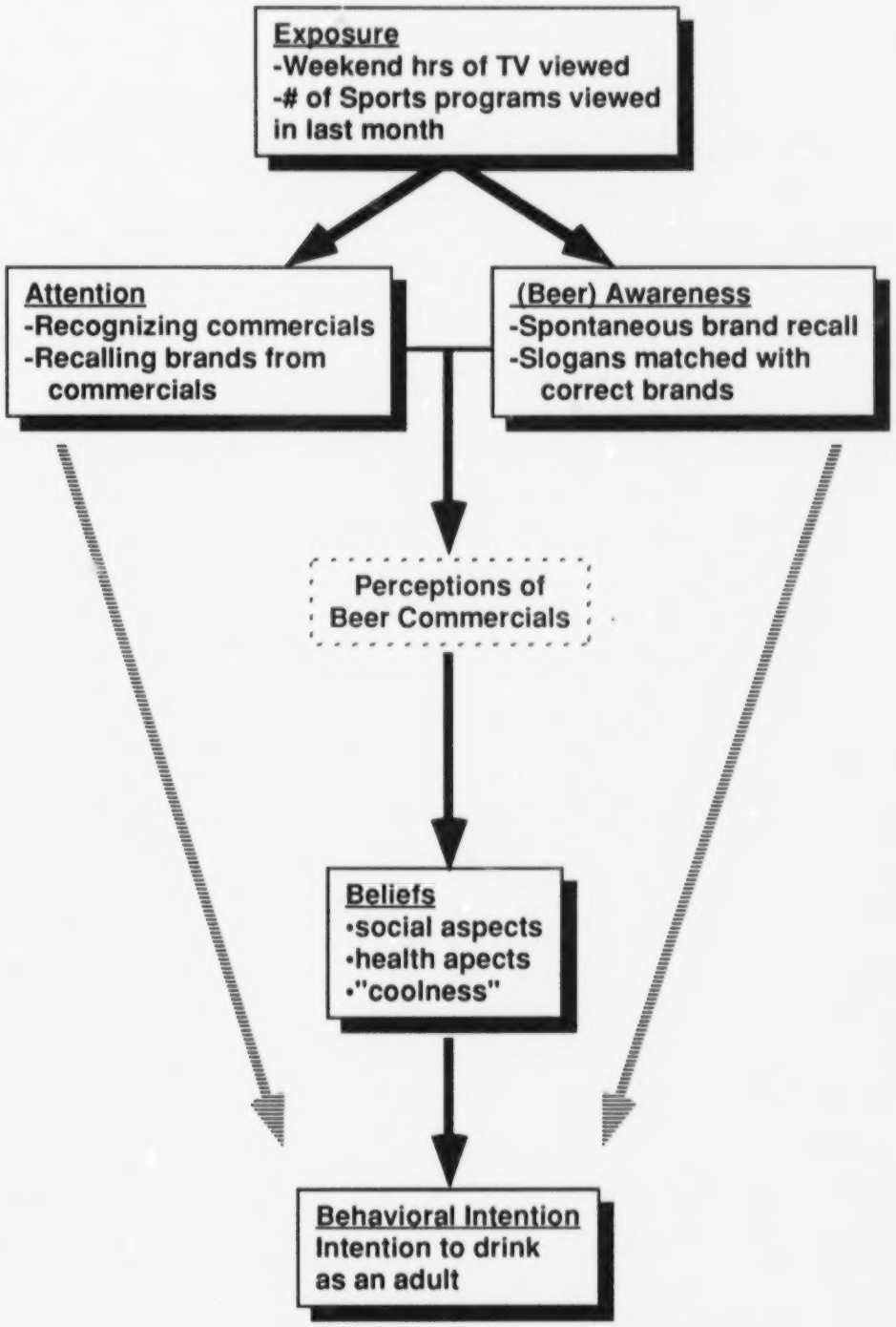
The working model for this study is fairly simple and straight-forward. The model hypothesizes that exposure to programming with beer commercials (i.e. sports and weekend programming) contributes to recognition of the commercials and recall of the brands advertised. In addition, exposure is thought to relate to a child's ability to name brands of beer and match beer slogans with specific brands. The greater the attention to the commercials the increased likelihood that children will view beer consumption in a positive light and will have a greater intention to drink when they reach adulthood.

Other aspects of the model presented in dotted line format suggest that attention could have a direct effect on expectation to drink. Also, attention might result in decreased skepticism about the commercial message thus contributing to formation of beliefs. This latter concept of decreased skepticism of the commercials is briefly presented in the report. The general model can be seen in Figure 1.

V. Study Results

The results of the study are presented in a series of figures. Key dependent variables (eg. Beliefs about beer) are presented by selected independent variables (eg. Number of beer commercials recognized). Each graph indicates whether relationships were statistically significant and the level of significance as determined by chi square tests.

Figure 1
General Model of Study



1. Exposure: Television Viewing and Children

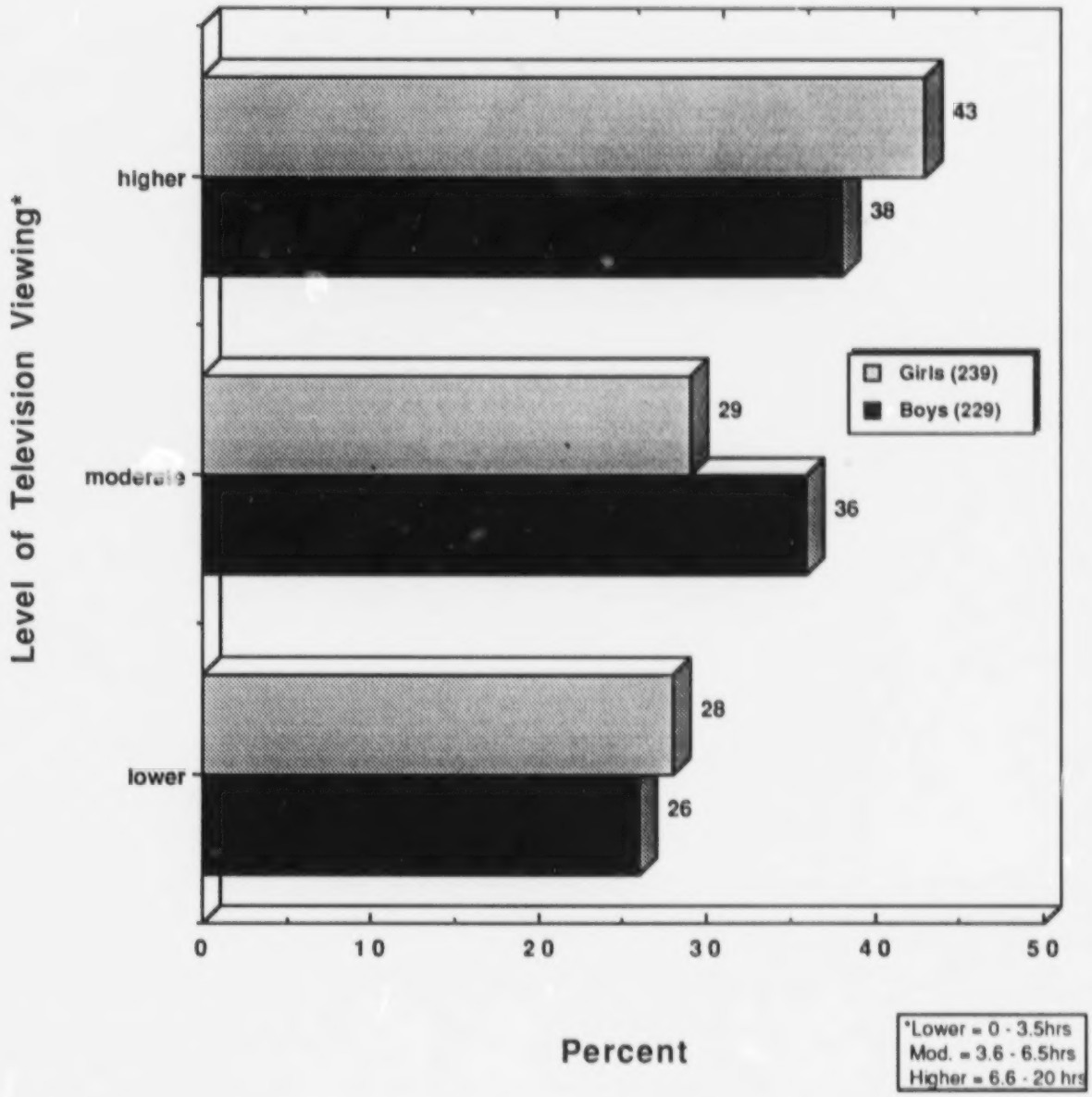
Every household in the study had at least one television set and each of the children interviewed watched it at least some of the time. On average, children reported watching approximately 15 1/4 hours of television per week. Boys spent about an hour more per week watching television than girls. (This is below the national average of 22 hours for this age group; hence the exposure to beer commercials reported in this study could be a conservative estimate).

Television plays an important role in children's lives and they seem to value the time spent viewing. Most of the children (83%) reported it to be one of their "favorite things to do" and many (77%) would be "very unhappy" if they could never watch TV. A substantial proportion of children (84%) reported that they "often learn things by watching television". Certainly, for our sample, television is central to daily activity.

A. Weekend Viewing

For this study a special measure of television viewing reflecting times when beer commercials are thought to appear frequently was constructed. This variable consisted of the number of weekend hours from noon until bedtime viewed over the course of a weekend. Weekend hours were selected because of the frequency of sports programming. The "lower" category includes those watching 3.5 hours or less (27%), the "moderate" category is comprised of those who reported viewing 3.6 to 6.5 hours (33%), and the "higher" category includes those viewing more than 6.6 hours (41%). Figure 2 indicates that boys and girls share similar weekend viewing patterns.

Figure 2
Weekend Television Viewing for Girls and Boys



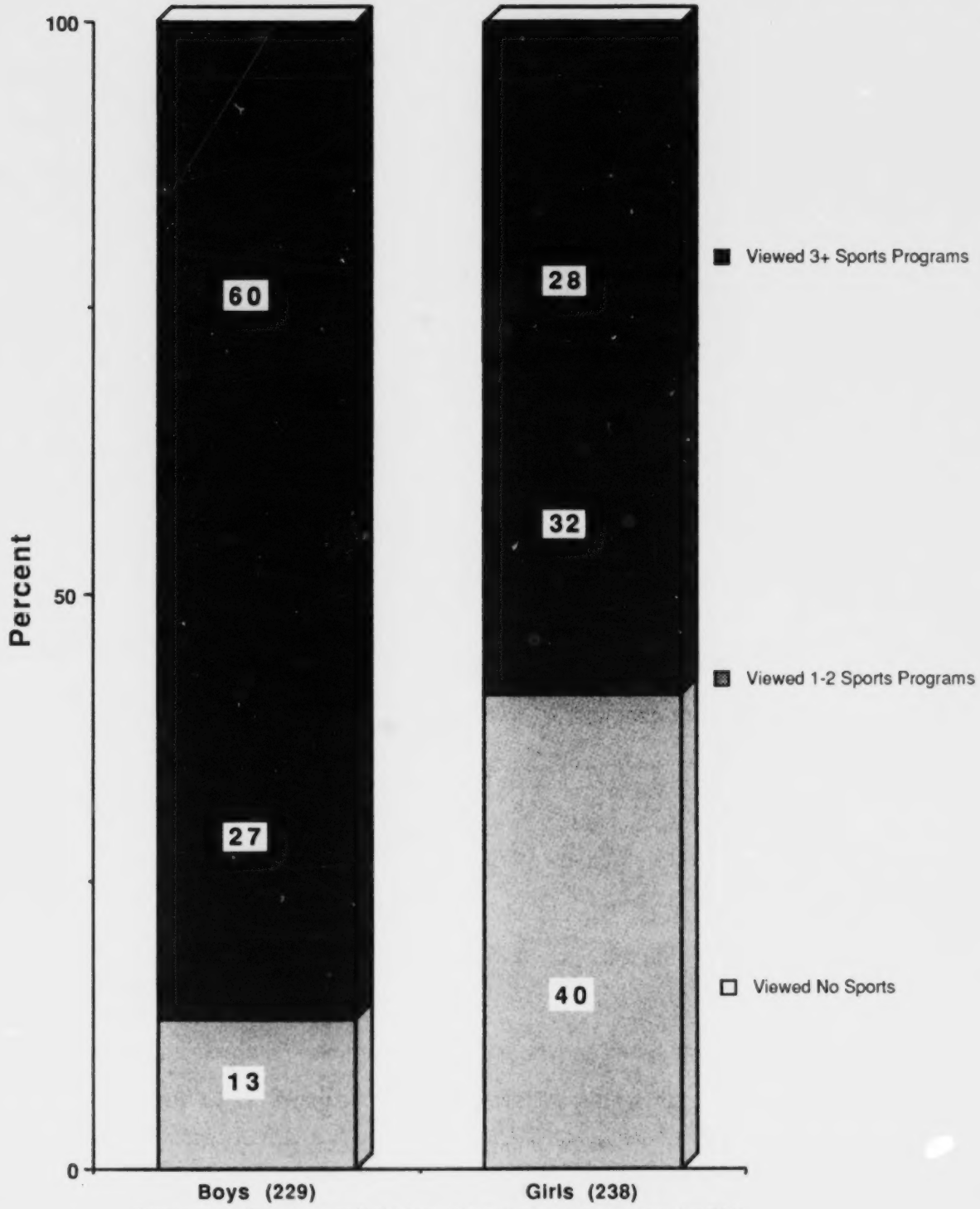
B. Sports Programming

Televised beer commercials occur with great frequency and are heavily concentrated in sports programming. On the average, sports programs contain approximately 8 beer commercials per event.[41] In addition, sports programming is likely to have banners, billboards, and other forms of promotion in constant view throughout the sporting event. Prime locations in sports facilities are dominated by beer and cigarette promotions. It was anticipated that viewing sports programming would be an important indicator of exposure to beer commercials.

In order to develop a better sense about exposure to beer commercials children were asked several questions regarding their viewing of sports programming. Responses indicated that children are frequent viewers of sports programs, pay relatively close attention, and like watching. Overall, 73% of children reported watching at least one sports program in the last month and 44% watched 3 or more televised sports events. Figure 3 shows that boys are much more likely than girls to watch these programs and thus be exposed to beer commercials. For example, more than twice as many boys (60%) as girls (28%) were more frequent viewers of sports programs, having watched at least three televised sports events in past month.

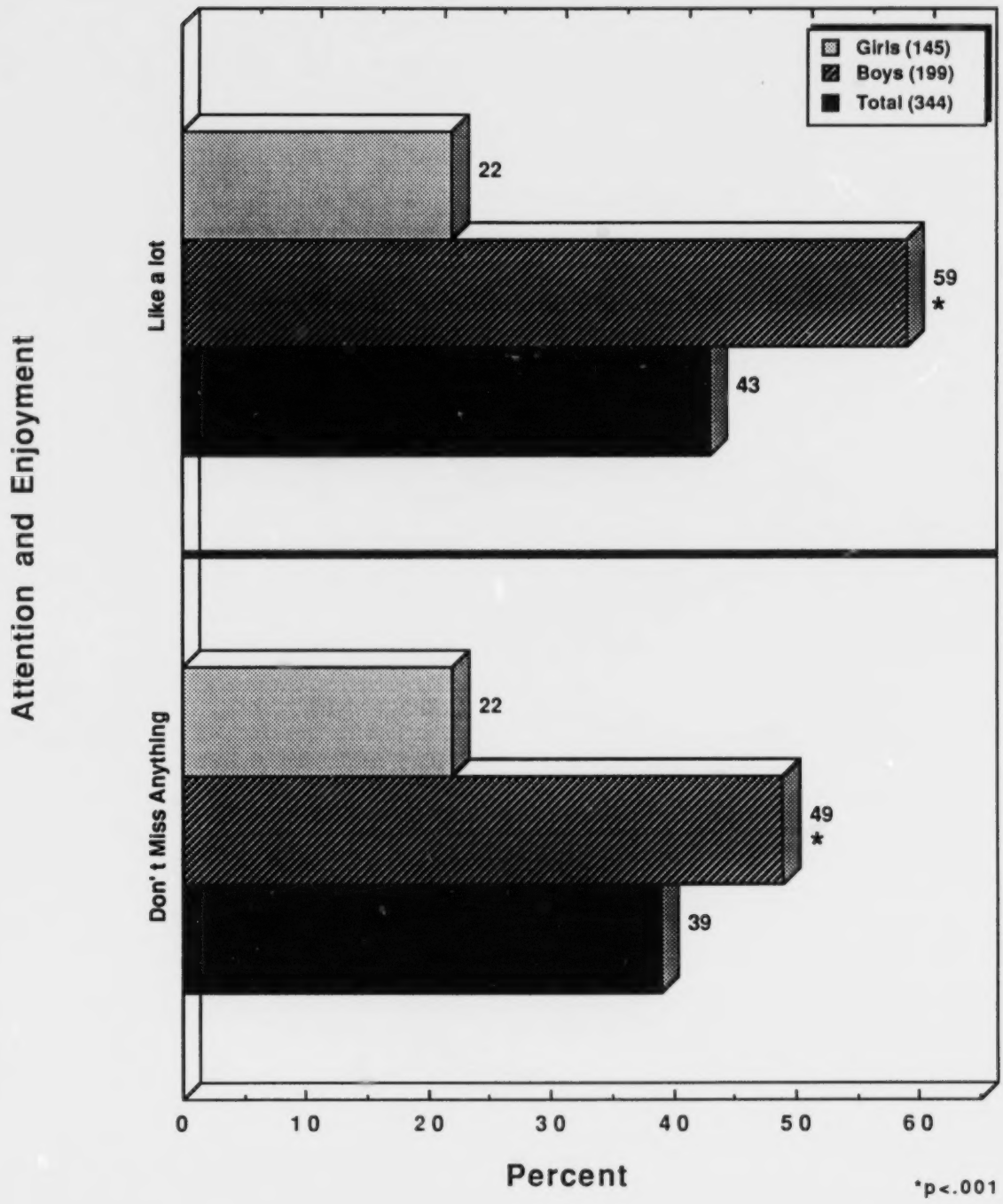
When children watch sports programs they appear to pay close attention to what is on the screen. Overall, of those who watched at least one sports program in the last month, 83% say they do not miss anything or only miss a little, and 74% say they "like a lot" or "like" watching these programs. Figures 4 presents the difference between girls and boys on the top categories for these dimensions. In both cases these differences are quite large. Boys are more than twice as likely to "not miss anything" when watching sports and almost 3 times as probable as girls to like watching these programs "a lot".

Figure 3
Number of Sports Programs Viewed in Past Month for Boys & Girls



Boys are significantly more likely than girls to view sports programs ($p<.001$)

Figure 4
Level of Attention and Enjoyment of Watching Televised Sports for Boys and Girls



In sum, the children in the sample were frequently exposed to beer advertisements in a setting where they pay attention and are engaged in an activity that they enjoy doing. The level of exposure and attention for boys is significantly higher than it is for girls. In general, the context of viewing appears quite conducive to an ideal environment for any advertiser wishing to communicate with the viewer.

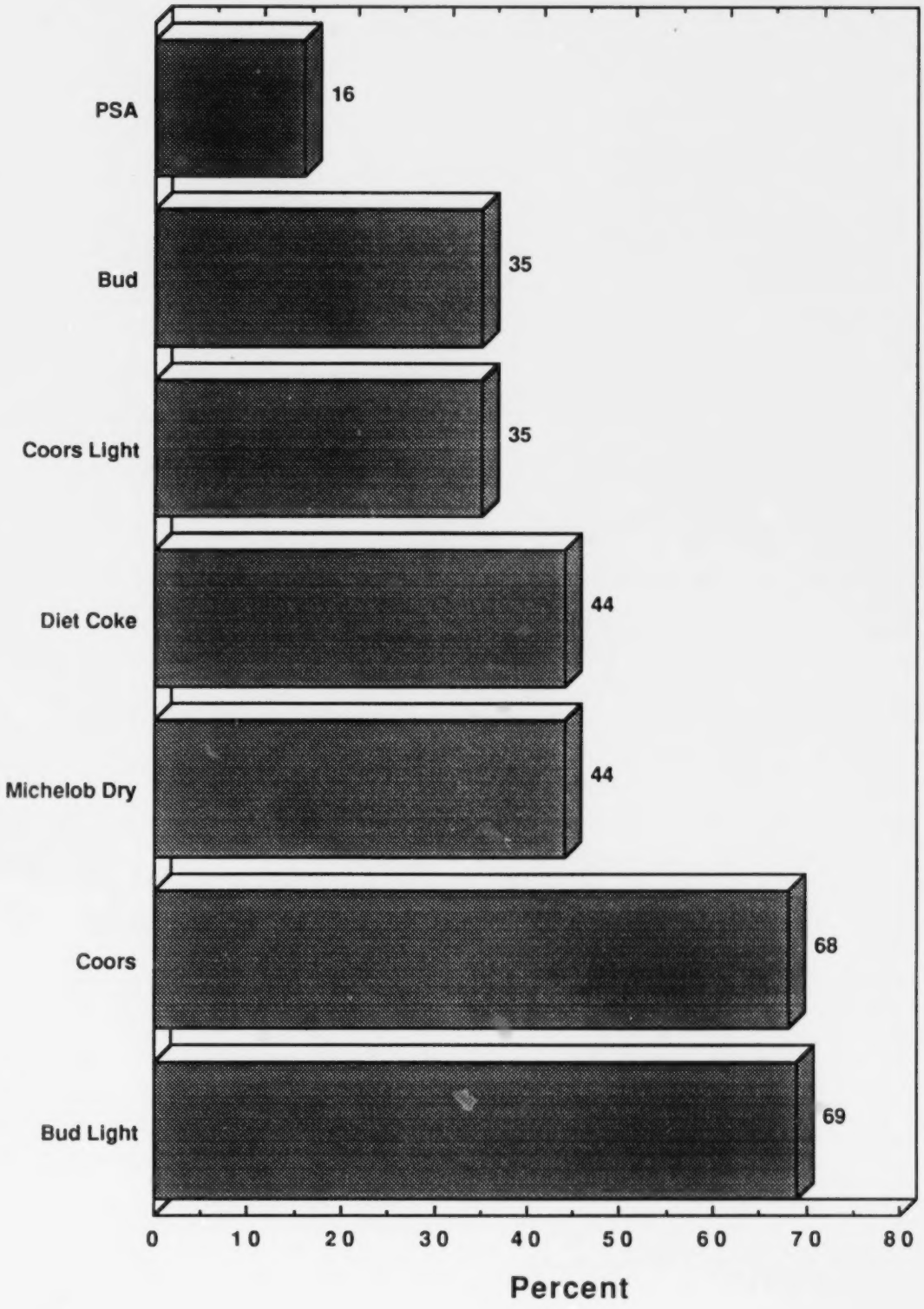
2. Attention: Recognition and Recall of Beer Commercials

A number of different items were used to assess whether children actually see and remember beer commercials and gain knowledge of the brands advertised. A two-step process was used. First, survey participants were asked whether they had seen each of seven commercials (recognition). If they thought they had seen the commercial they were then asked if they could recall the brand of the product advertised. Recognition and brand recall variables constructed from this process are categorized generally in this report as measures of attention.

A. Recognition of Commercials

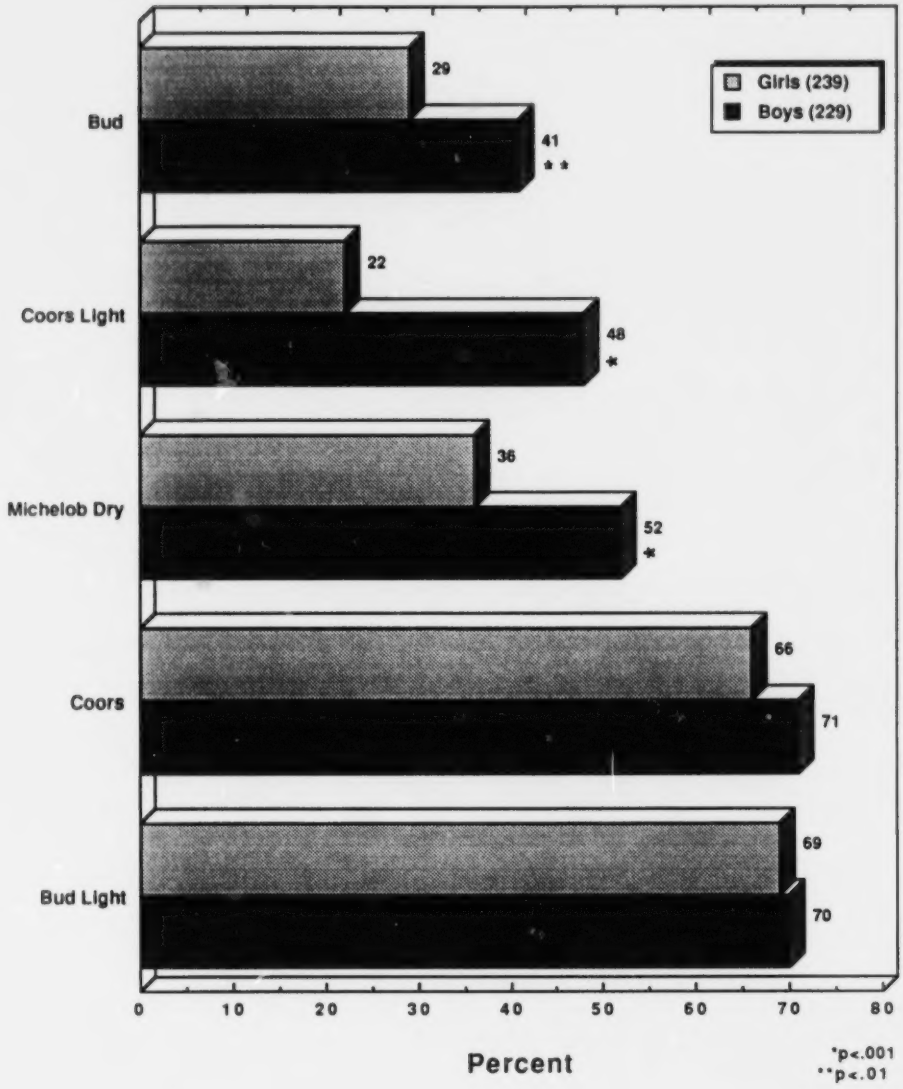
In order to assess the ability of the children to recognize specific commercials each child was shown 7 photographs of "stills" from currently televised commercials. Five of these photographs were from advertisements for brands of beer, one was from a "designated driver" public service announcement, and one was for Diet Coke. Any reference to brand names was blacked out of the photographs. The commercials were taken from sports programming presented on the major networks. Figure 5 presents data for those who said they definitely remembered seeing the commercial represented in the photograph.

Figure 5
Recognition of Television Commercials



The level of recognition varied widely but was highest for Bud Light (69%) and Coors (68%). Budweiser (35%), Michelob Dry (44%) and Coors Light (35%) were less frequently recognized and were significantly more likely to be recognized by boys than girls (See Figure 6). The photo of the Bud Light commercial featured Spuds Mackenzie with 3 women while the Coors' ad featured a picture of a foaming can with a beer mug handle attached to it.

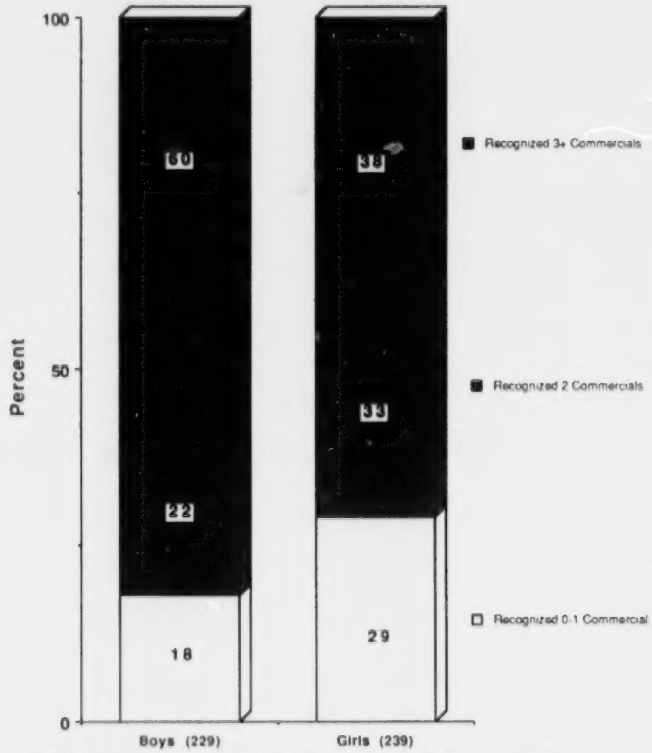
Figure 6
Recognition of Beer Commercials for Boys and Girls



The public service announcement featuring Magic Johnson of the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team was not well recognized. Roughly 1 of 6 children said they had seen this message regarding the "designated driver" program. Diet Coke is recognized by less than half of the sample. This contrasts sharply with beer commercials, not intended to reach this audience, some of which have substantially higher recognition.

Figure 7 indicates that beer commercials are readily recognized by the children in the sample. Overall, 76 percent recognized at least 2 commercials and 26 percent reported seeing 4 or 5 commercials. Boys were significantly more likely than girls to claim to have seen the commercials and were overrepresented at the higher levels of recognition. For example, boys were 4 times as likely as girls to recognize 5 beer commercials (12% versus 3%).

Figure 7
Recognition of TV Beer Commercials for Boys & Girls



Boys are significantly more likely than girls to recognize televised beer commercials ($p < .001$)

B. Recall of Brands from Commercials

Those who said they had seen an ad were then asked about the brand name of the product being advertised. Anheuser Busch products scored well. Of those children who said that they had seen the Bud Light commercial, 77% were able to correctly identify the brand. Correct recall for the Budweiser commercial was even higher with 87% of those seeing it correctly identifying the brand. Coors also achieved good brand recall with 70% of the children correctly identifying that commercial. Michelob Dry, a relative newcomer at the time of the survey, and perhaps more adult oriented, was correctly identified by 33% of the children who said they had seen it.

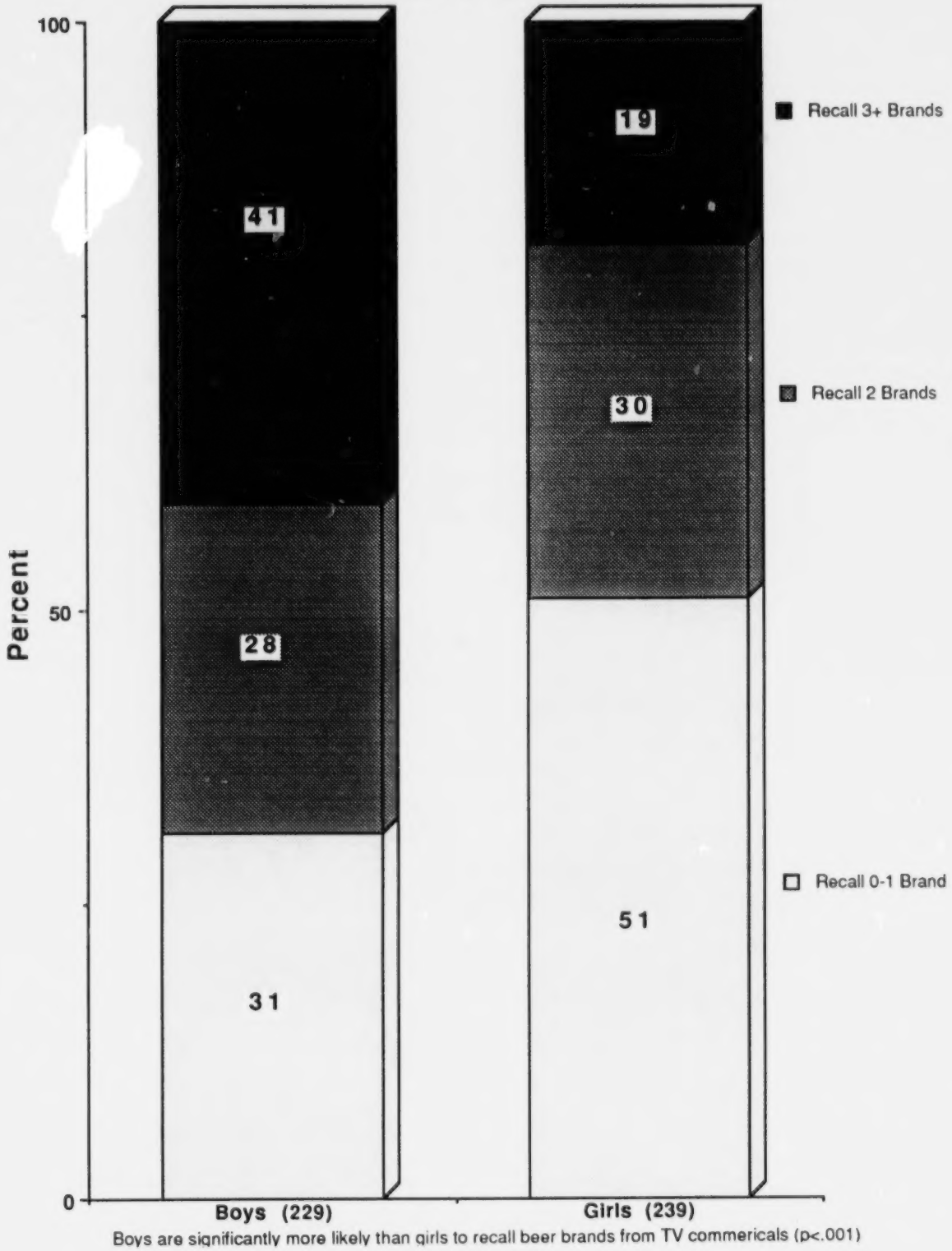
Among the non-beer commercials, the "designated driver" public service announcement was correctly identified by only 9% of those who said they had seen it. This meant that the respondent was able to link the commercial to prevention of drinking driving. Diet Coke was correctly identified by 46% of those who said they saw the ad. The comparison of two products, beer and diet soda, is quite interesting. The children generally have much higher recognition and brand recall for the beer products than for a soft drink with perhaps as high a visibility as any product in the world.

Overall, a substantial majority of the sample were able to correctly recall the brand associated with the commercial they reported having seen. Figure 8 illustrates that boys are better able to recall the brands than are girls. For example, the proportion of boys who can correctly recall 3+ brands from the commercials is more than twice that of girls -- 41% vs 19%.

C. Recognition, recall, and viewing

The general model underlying this study suggests that exposure to programs and times where beer advertising is thought to occur should be associated with recognition of the commercials and with correct identification of

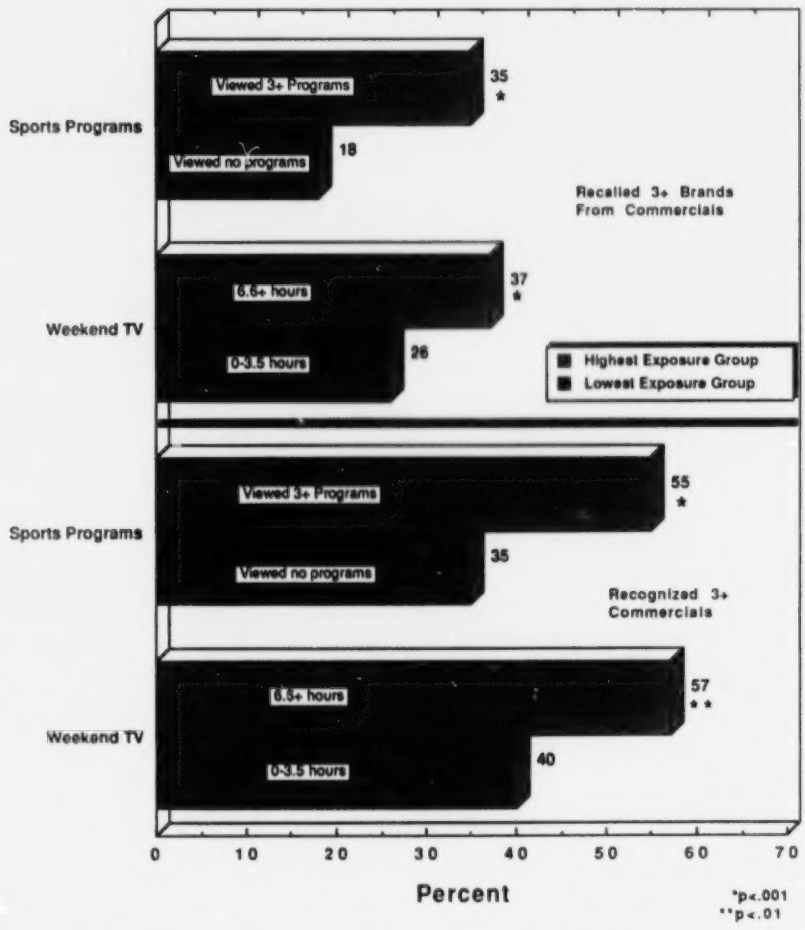
Figure 8
Number of Beer Brands Recalled from Television Commercials for Boys & Girls



Boys are significantly more likely than girls to recall beer brands from TV commericals (p<.001)

the brand advertised. Figure 9 indicates a significant relationship on these variables. For example, 40 percent of those watching 0-3.5 hours of weekend television were able to recognize 3 or more beer commercials. However, 57 percent of those in the highest viewing group (>6.5 hours) were able to recognize 3+ commercials. This relationship is equally striking when those who do not watch sports programs are compared with those viewing 3 or more televised sports events in the past month.

Figure 9
Recogniton of Beer Commercials &
Recall of Brands Advertised by Exposure



Children who watch more hours of weekend television and more sports programs are significantly more likely to recognize beer commercials and recall brand names

Watching television on weekends and viewing sports programming is also significantly associated with being able to link the right brand with the right commercial. For example, Figure 9 clearly shows that most frequent viewers of sports programs were twice as likely as non sports viewers to recall the brand being advertised (35% vs 18%).

The relationships among exposure to beer commercials, recognition of beer commercials, and recall of the brand being advertised are large and consistent. The statistically significant associations clearly indicate that children's exposure to beer commercials contributes to enhanced recognition and brand recall.

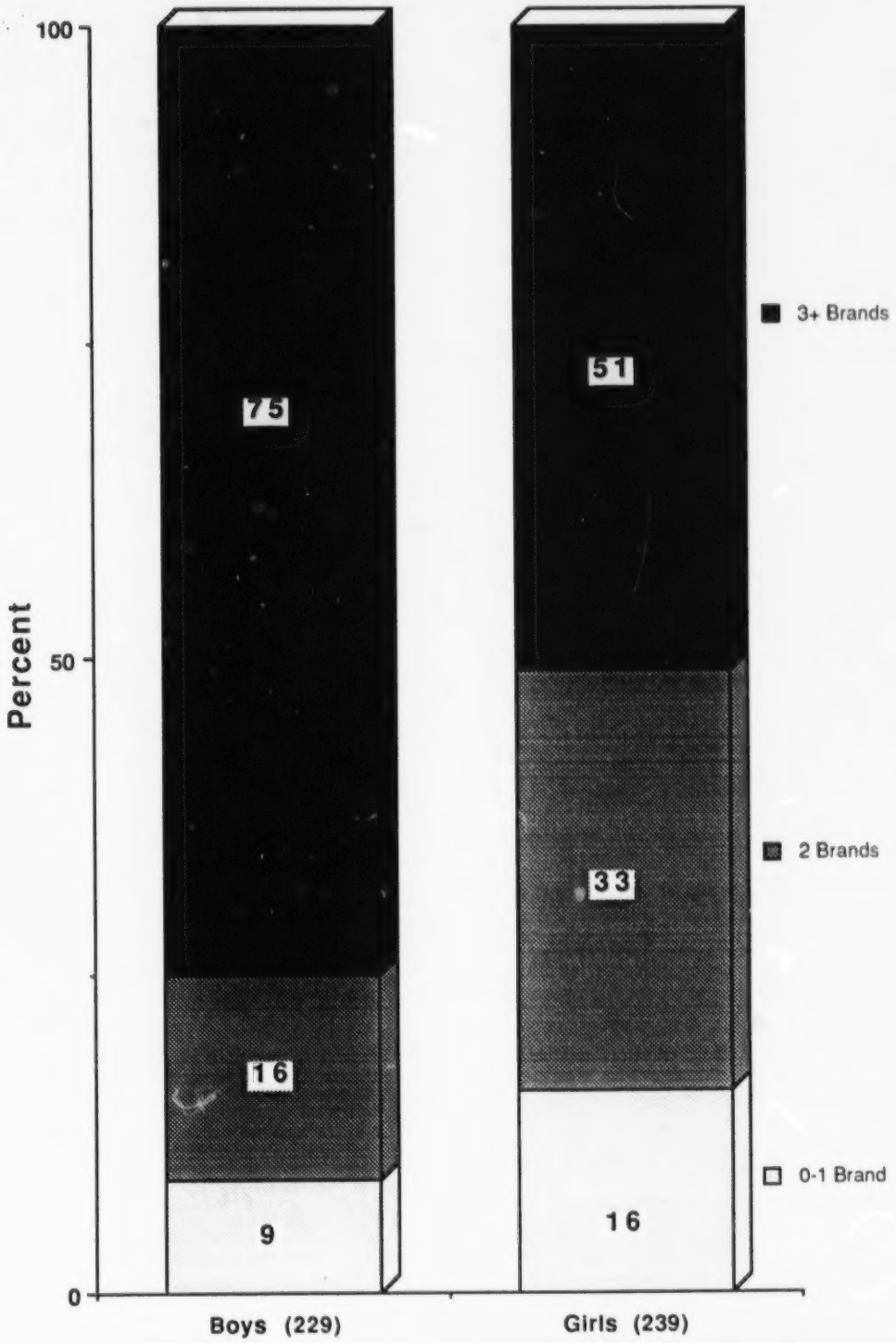
3. Attention: Slogan Matching and Unaided Brand Recall

A second assessment of attention to beer commercials explored awareness of beer advertising among children in two additional ways. First, before they were asked any questions about specific commercials, children were asked how many brands of beer they could name. A maximum of five brands were recorded. Second, interviewers read a series of 6 slogans (5 beer and 1 soft drink) to each child and asked the child to identify the brand of beverage that went with the slogan. A list of brands was provided to the child.

A. Unprompted Knowledge of Beer Brands

Virtually all children (97%) were able to name at least one brand of beer. Figure 10 indicates that almost two-thirds of children are able to name 3 or more brands. Boys know more brands of beer than girls. For example, 46 percent of boys listed 4 or 5 brands compared to 20 percent of the girls: a difference of 130 percent.

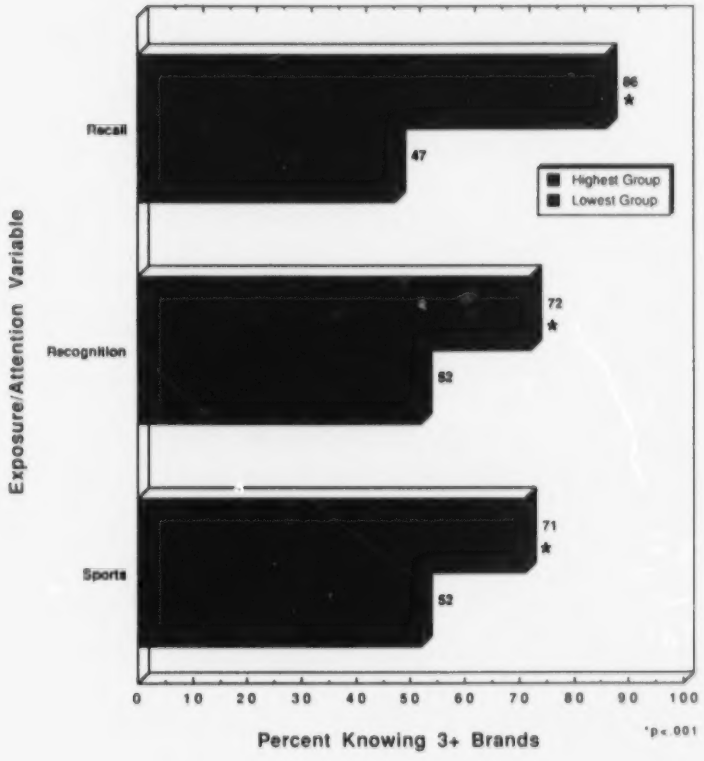
Figure 10
Unprompted Knowledge of Beer Brands



Boys are significantly more likely than girls to know beer more beer brands (p<.001)

Knowing the names of different beers is consistently associated with other exposure and attention variables. Figure 11 shows that exposure to sports programs and recognition of beer commercials are significantly related to knowing brands. For example, 71 percent of those watching 3 or more sports programs in the last month could name 3 or more brands compared to 52 percent of those who watched no sports programs. As might be expected, being able to recall the brand being advertised in a beer commercial is strongly related to being able to recall more brands without prompts -- 47 percent of those who recalled 0 - 1 brand from a commercial could spontaneously name 3+ brands compared to 86 percent of those who recalled 3+ brands from the televised commercials.

Figure 11
Unprompted Knowledge of Beer Brand by Exposure/Attention



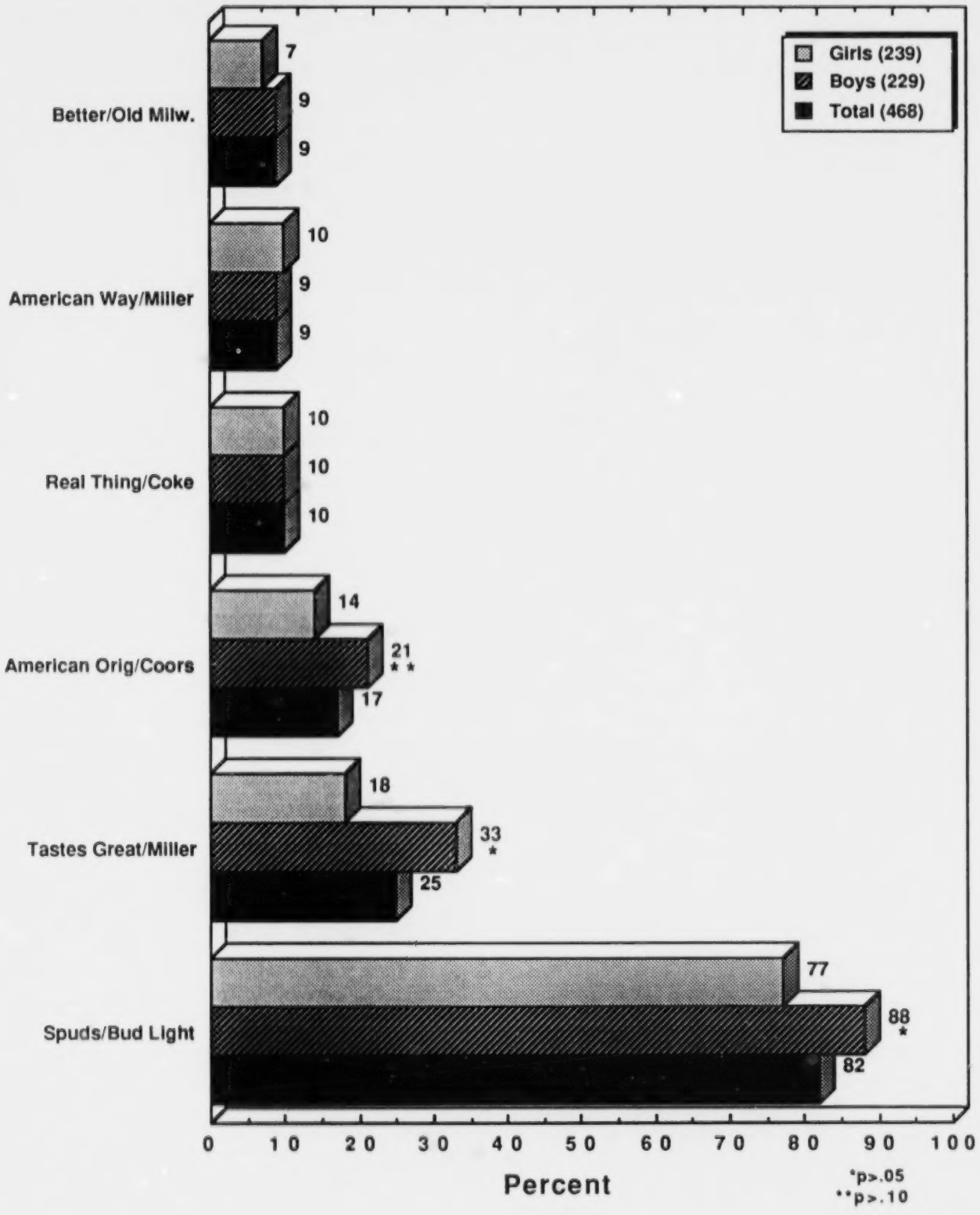
Overall, children appear knowledgeable about the different brands of beer. Boys are significantly more likely to name more brands. In general, being able to name brands of beer without prompting is significantly associated with watching sports programs and other, more specific, measures of attention to beer commercials.

B. Slogan Matching

Children are fairly adept at matching beer slogans with beer products as can be seen in Figure 12. "Spuds Mackenzie, the Original Party Animal," is clearly associated with Bud Light. Almost 9 of 10 boys correctly matched this slogan -- significantly higher than the 77% of girls who correctly matched it. In contrast, the Coke slogan was correctly matched by only 10% of the sample. Overall awareness of the connection between Spuds and Bud Light was more than 3 times higher than for Miller and Coors products. While it may not be a great surprise that children recall Spuds, given his potential appeal to this age group, the degree to which Spuds is linked by the children to the product is striking.

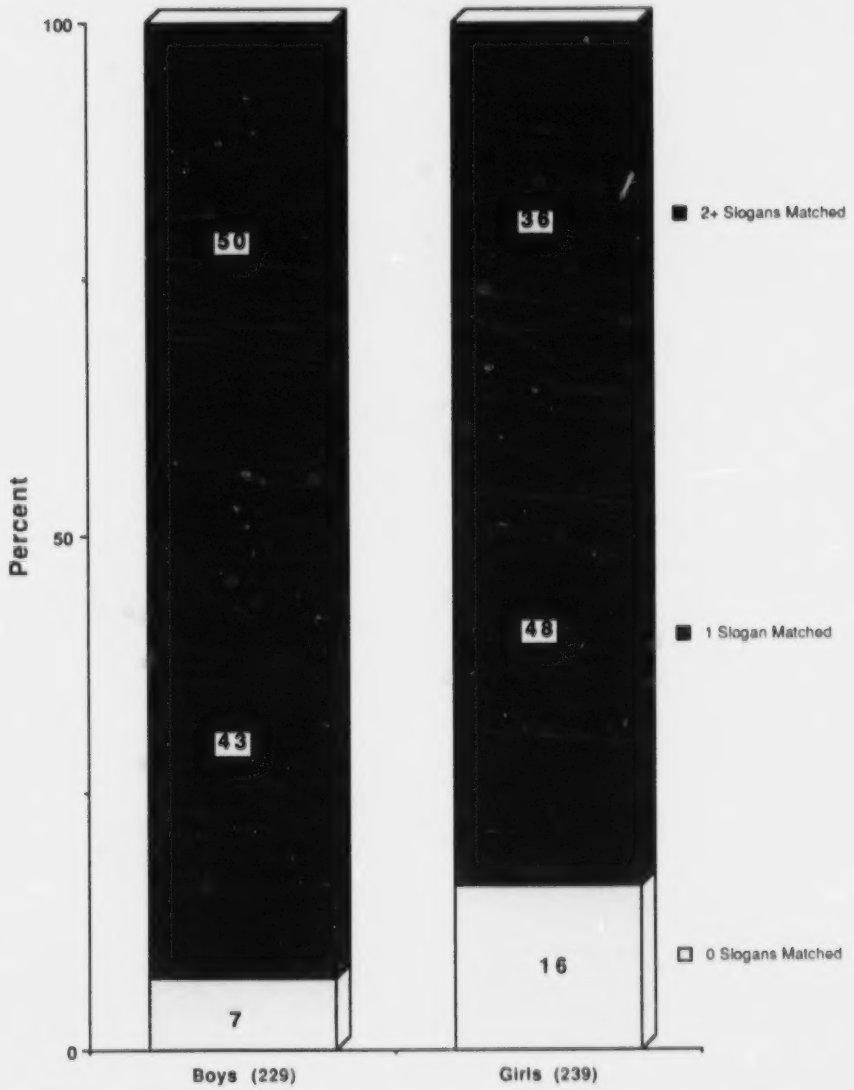
Other slogans were less likely to be linked to the right brands. Miller Lite's long running "Tastes Great/Less Filling" slogan was correctly matched by 33% of the boys compared to 18% of the girls and Coors, "An American Original" was correctly matched by 21% of the boys and 14% of the girls. Despite this relatively lower level of matching, the "still" of the Coors commercial shown to the children to assess recognition included the slogan and was recognized second only to the Spuds commercial.

Figure 12
Slogan Matching for Boys and Girls



Overall, most of the children were able to correctly match at least 1 slogan (89%) and many (43%) were able to match 2 or more. Consistent with the findings for other variables, Figure 13 indicates boys are significantly more likely to know about slogans than girls. For example, 3 times as many boys (15%) as girls (5%) were able to match at least 3 slogans.

Figure 13
Number of Beer Slogans Correctly Matched for Boys & Girls

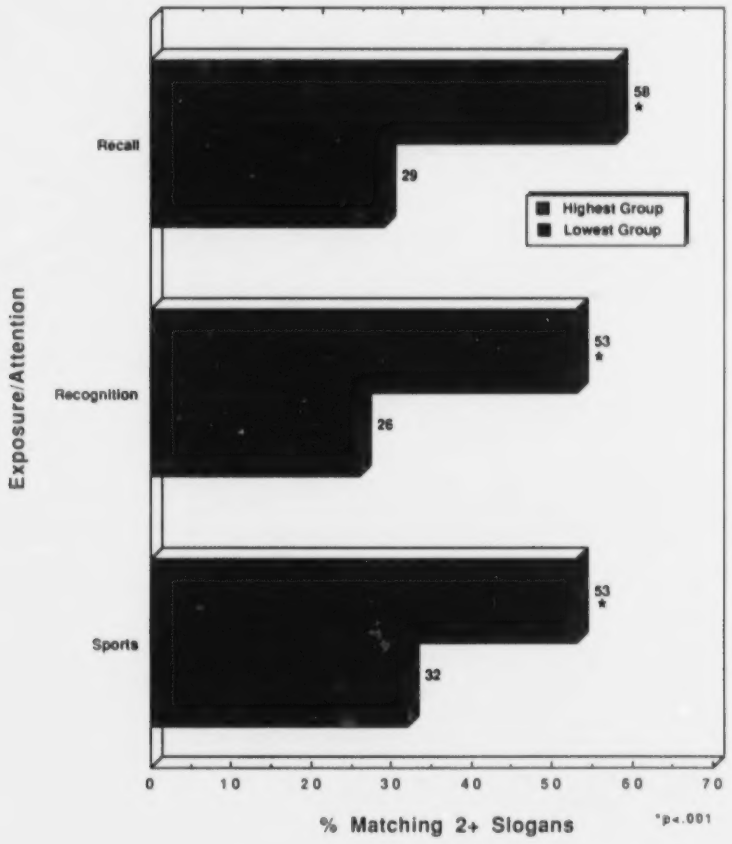


Boys are significantly more likely than girls to be able to match slogans with beer brands ($p<.001$)

Figure 14 shows a consistent, statistically significant relationship between exposure/attention variables and correct slogan matching. For example, of those who don't watch sports programs 32 percent are able to match at least 2 slogans compared to 53 percent of those watching 3 or more sports programs.

The differences between the higher and lower attention groups are substantial. Those children who recognize 3 or more commercials are more than twice as likely to match at least 2 slogans (26% vs 53%). Children who are highest in recalling specific brands from commercials are twice as likely to be more adept at matching slogans than those in the lower group (58% vs 29%).

Figure 14
Beer Slogan Matching by Exposure & Attention



In sum, this sample of 10-13 year olds, particularly boys, is quite knowledgeable of popular slogans used to promote beer. Spuds Mackenzie, in particular, has been extremely effective in getting the attention of young people.

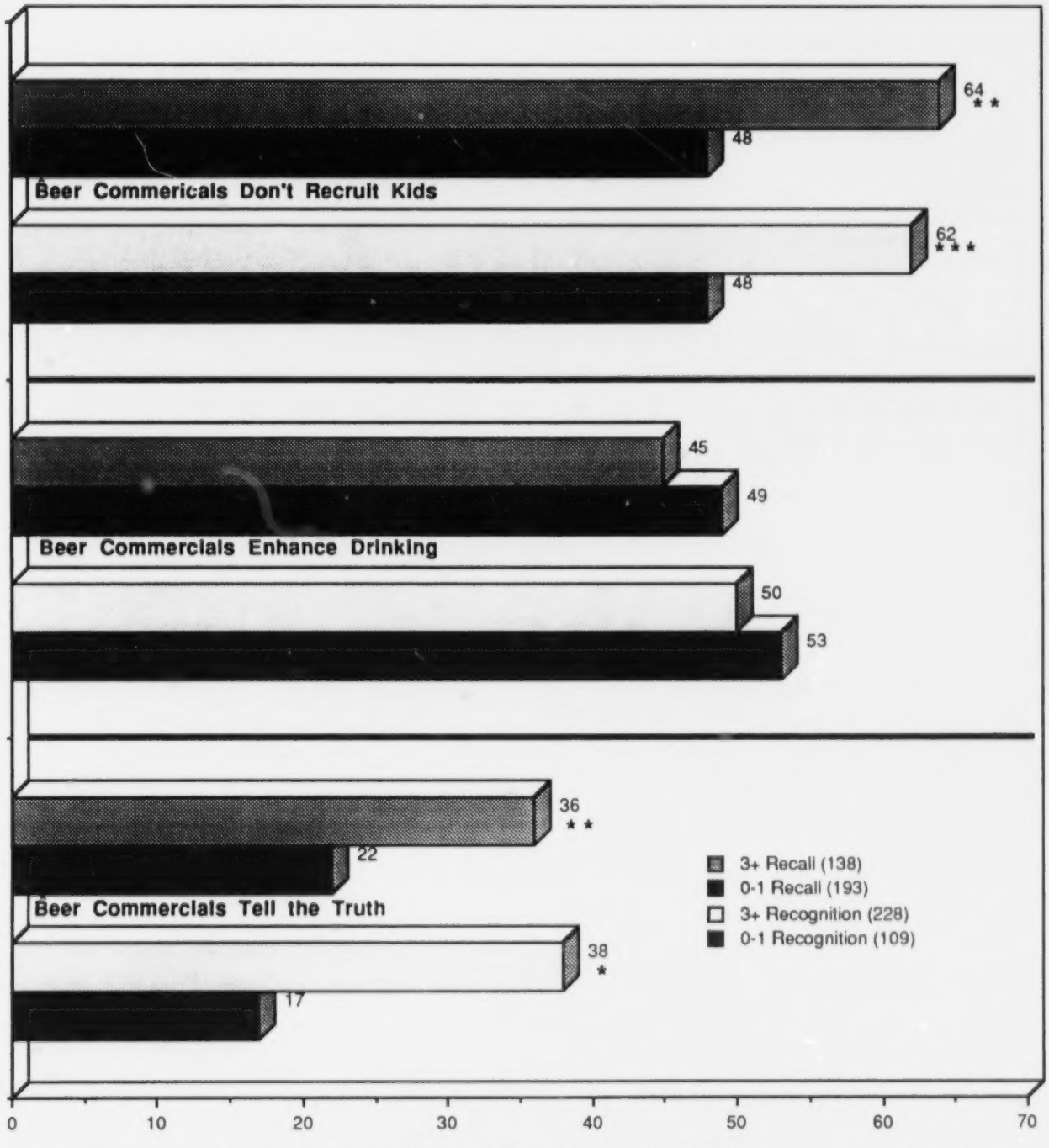
4. General Perceptions of Beer Commercials

A series of 3 questions was asked to provide a sense of whether the children might be skeptical of beer commercials on several dimensions. The first question asked whether beer commercials, "tell the truth," the second asked whether the commercials, "make drinking seem better than it really is," and the final one asked whether beer advertising, "tries to get kids to drink."

Surprisingly, over a quarter of the children (28%) think beer commercials are truthful. Boys (33%) are significantly more likely to believe this than girls (24%). Approximately half of the children believed that beer commercials make drinking seem better than it is, and 44% think it is true that beer commercials try to get kids to drink. In this latter case girls (51%) were significantly more likely than boys (36%) to think the ads were trying to get kids to drink.

Figure 15 illustrates the relationship between attention to beer commercials and attribution of some degree of "distrust" of the ads. The more children recognize commercials and are able to recall brands from the ads, the more likely they are to believe that beer ads "tell the truth" and don't try to get kids to drink. For example, among those able to recognize 0-1 beer commercial 17 percent think beer commercials tell the truth while among those able to recognize 3+ commercials more than twice as many (38%) believe these commercials to be truthful. There is no relationship between the attention variables and the view that commercials enhance drinking.

Figure 15
Perceptions of Beer Commercials by Attention



*p<.001
**p<.01
***p<.05

The response to this series of questions presents some interesting implications. Basically, greater attention to the commercials is associated with a presumably higher level of trust of the message. Boys are more likely than girls to find the ads believable but less likely to suspect that they are intended to get kids (like them) to drink. This suggests that boys, when compared to girls, may be less critical and less able to filter out misleading messages of beer commercials. Boys who should be more wary because of their higher risk to drink and to have problems appear to be less skeptical of the commercials.

5. Beliefs About Beer: Social, Heath, Coolness

The general model of this study suggests that children may partly develop beliefs and an understanding of the role of beer in society from exposure and attention to beer commercials. These beliefs, from an alcohol education and prevention perspective, often run counter to careful use of alcoholic beverages. For example, beer is often presented as an essential ingredient for having friends, having a good time, and being part of the group.

One of the purposes of this study was to assess whether exposure to beer commercials is related to children's beliefs about the use of beer. In order to do this a series of items were constructed and administered in the questionnaire. Many of these items were developed to reflect the content analysis findings of the Postman report, Myths, Men, and Beer. This was a difficult undertaking because the subtleties reflected in beer commercials (e.g. Postman's suggestion that ads encourage drinking and driving) are difficult to assess, particularly among such a young age group which tends to see the world in concrete terms. The questionnaire is displayed in Appendix 2.

These items were analyzed using a principal axis factor analysis technique which produced three clusters of items with acceptable reliability.[42] These clusters are shown in table 1. Internal consistency scores using

Cronbach's alpha were calculated for each cluster. The social aspects scale internal consistency score is .74. The health beliefs scale internal consistency score is .75 and the third scale, reflecting macho or "coolness" aspects of beer consumption, has an internal consistency score of .62. These items were used as a general measure of beliefs about beer.

Table 1
Scales of Beliefs About Beer and other Alcohol

Social Aspects	Health Aspects	Coolness
1. Having a beer is a nice reward after a hard day's work.	1. It is very dangerous to drive after having 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks.	1. It is definitely cool to drink beer.
2. Drinking beer is a good way to relax.	2. If a pregnant women drinks alcohol, it can hurt her unborn baby.	2. Drinking beer is a sign that a boy has become a man.
3. Drinking beer together is a way that men show they are good friends.	3. People should not get into a car if the driver has had 2 or 3 beers.	3. Drinking beer makes life more exciting.
4. It's easier for people to get to know each other after they've had a few beers.	4. Drinking alcoholic beverages may cause health problems.	4. Drinking a lot and then driving a car is a good way to show that you are tough.
5. Bars are a good place for grown-ups to hang out with friends.	5. If a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, it can cause birth defects.	

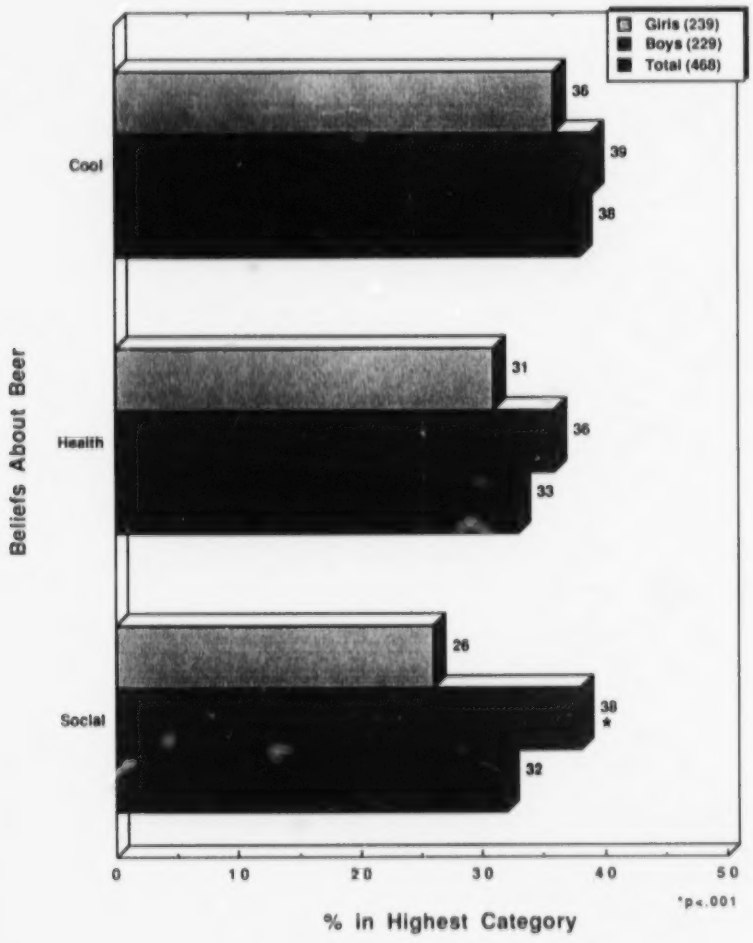
A substantial proportion of the children hold a set of beliefs regarding beer use that may be more consistent with television commercial reality than with public health reality. A high score on the social scale reflects a set of beliefs that beer drinking facilitates social interaction and is a tension reducer. Figure 16 shows that 32% of the children believe generally that beer is a good way to relax, get to know people, and unwind with friends. The world of the beer commercial is the perceived reality for this group of children. Boys are significantly more likely than girls to accept this vision of beer use.

A high score on the health scale reflects a view that alcohol is not a great health risk. This was the only scale that included items that asked generally about alcohol and not just beer. Health issues are only referred to by

implication in television commercials. For example, Postman suggests that commercials such as the Michelob commercial that contains images of fast cars, women at a nightclub, and beer encourage drinking/driving among youth by presumably making it look attractive. The age group of our sample is probably not developmentally capable of the type of abstract thinking that would make this connection -- especially compared to the explicit images concerning beer, friendships and relaxation.

Figure 16 also indicates that one-third of the children believe that alcohol is not a substantial health risk. For example, looking at the specific item,

Figure 16
Beliefs About Beer for Boys and Girls



"People should not get into a car if the driver has had 2 or 3 beers", 1 of 5 kids said this was "absolutely false". In addition, 1 of 10 children thought the relatively mild statement, "Drinking alcoholic beverages may cause health problems" was "absolutely false". Overall, boys and girls did not differ on their beliefs as reflected by this scale.

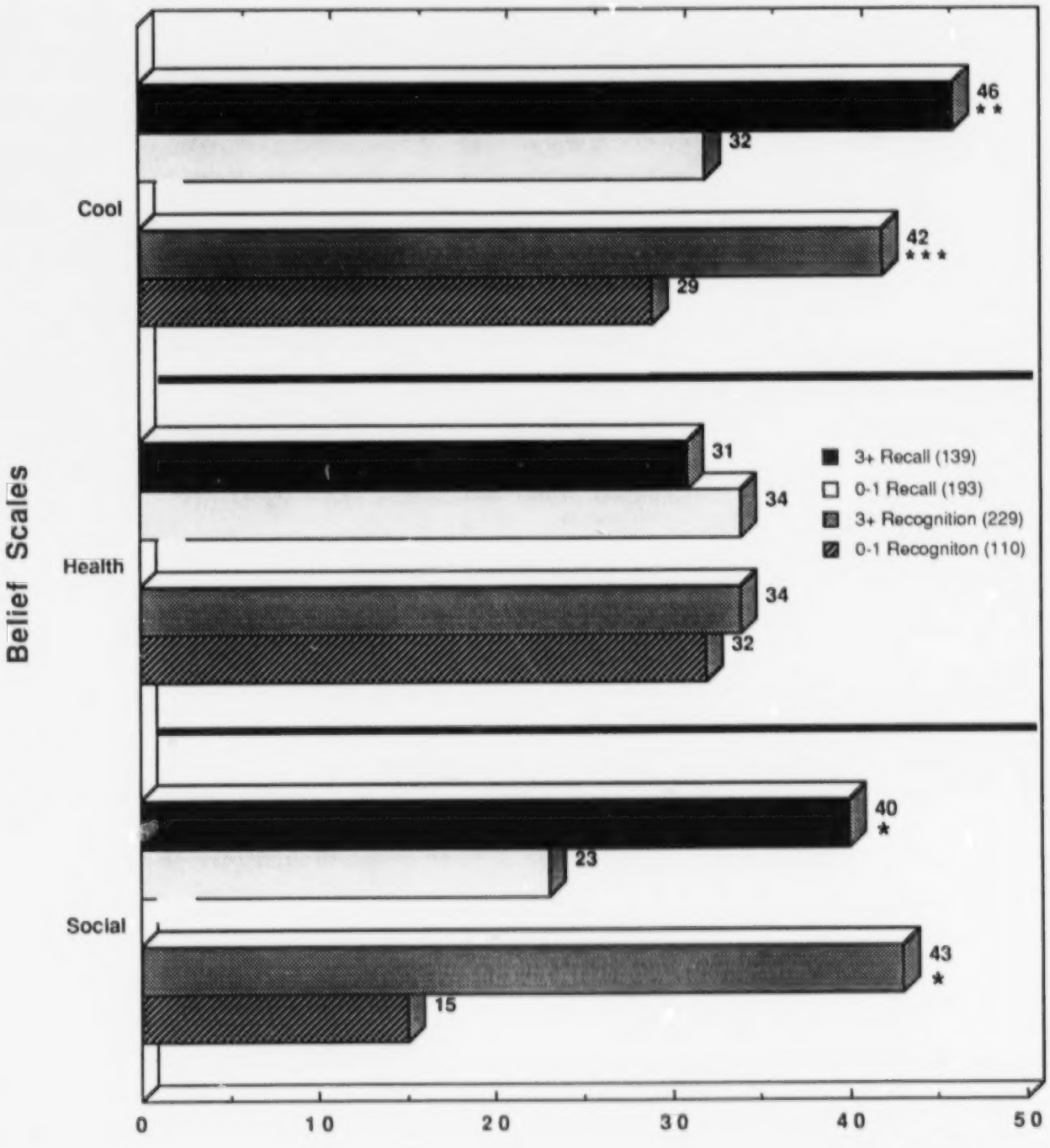
The final scale focuses on the image of some beer advertising that suggests that use of the product is cool and manly. Almost 40% of the children scored in the higher part of this scale. Surprisingly there was no difference in beliefs between girls and boys.

Overall, the data suggest that a sizable group of young people may be growing up with a distorted view of beer use in society. For example, almost two-thirds of the sample scored in the high end of at least one scale. These kinds of beliefs may not cause problem drinking, but are a contributing factor

A. Beer Beliefs and Attention to Beer Commercials

Beliefs about the social aspects of beer use are significantly associated with attention to beer commercials. Figure 17 shows that scores on 2 of the 3 scales are related to attention variables. The likelihood of having favorable beliefs about the social facilitation aspects of beer use or the idea that beer use is "cool" or "macho" is significantly associated with how many commercials children recognize and their ability to recall the brand being advertised. Scores on the health belief scale are not associated with the attention variables.

Figure 17
Belief Scales by Attention



Some of the differences in the exposure groups are quite substantial. For example, 15 percent of those who recognize 0-1 commercials score in the top end of the social scale compared to 43 percent of those recognizing 3 or more commercials -- almost a three-fold difference. Of those who could correctly recall none or just 1 brand name with the commercial 32 percent scored in the top end of the "cool" scale, compared to 46 percent of those who could recall 3 or more brand names.

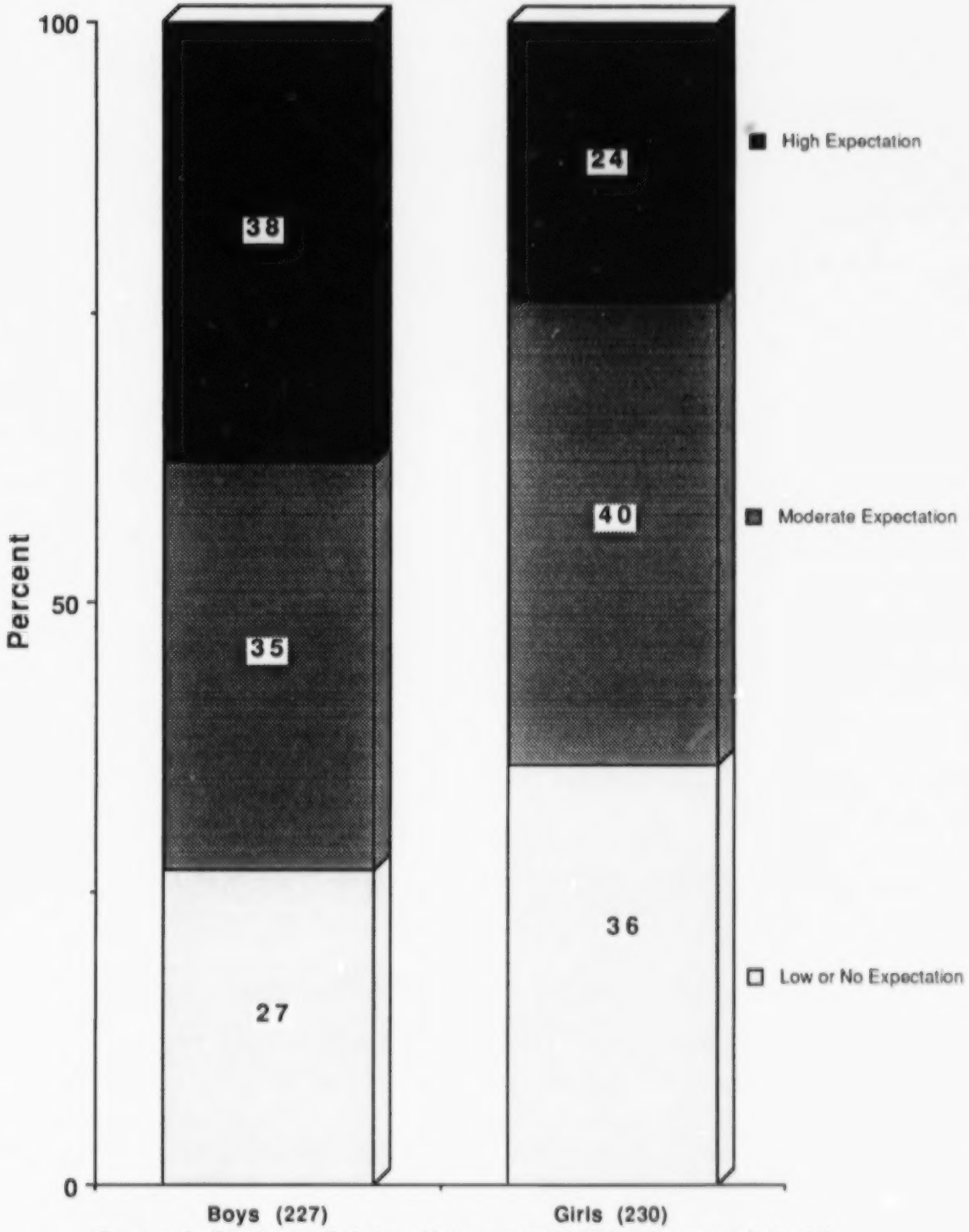
Overall, the more commercials a child can recognize and the more brands he or she can recall, the more likely that child is to have a set of beliefs that are inconsistent with the public health reality about the dangers of alcohol. No apparent relationship was found between recognition and recall and the health scale.

6. Expectations about Drinking as an Adult

A measure of the child's expectation about drinking as an adult was created from four items on a self-administered questionnaire. The child was provided with questions about his or her likelihood of drinking beer, wine, wine coolers, and hard liquor as an adult. The scale for each beverage included: definitely will not drink; probably will not drink; will probably drink but less often than once a week; and, will probably drink at least once a week. Total scores were averaged and placed in lower, middle and higher categories.

Approximately one-third of children have little or no expectation to drink when they become adults. An almost equal proportion appear to have a fairly strong expectation about drinking with some frequency. Boys are significantly more likely than girls to hold stronger expectations about drinking. Figure 18 shows that 31 percent of the boys scored at the higher end of the scale compared to 24 percent of the girls.

Figure 18
Expectation to Drink as an Adult for Boys & Girls



Boys are significantly more likely than girls to expect to drink when they are adults ($p<.01$)

Expectation to drink is consistently associated with exposure, recognition, and recall. Figure 19 indicates that the higher exposure/attention groups are consistently more likely to have increased expectations about drinking. For example, 25 percent of those who watched no sports programs in the last month expressed a strong expectation to drink as an adult. This compares with 39 percent of those who viewed three or more sports events on television. The most frequent viewers of televised sporting events were about 56 percent more likely than non-viewers to have a stronger expectation to drink as an adult. This relationship is also quite apparent for the two attention variables. For example, 22 percent of those who recalled 0-1 brand expressed a strong expectation to drink compared to 41 percent of those who recalled 3 or more brands -- almost a two-fold difference.

Figure 19
Expectation to Drink as an Adult
by Exposure/Attention

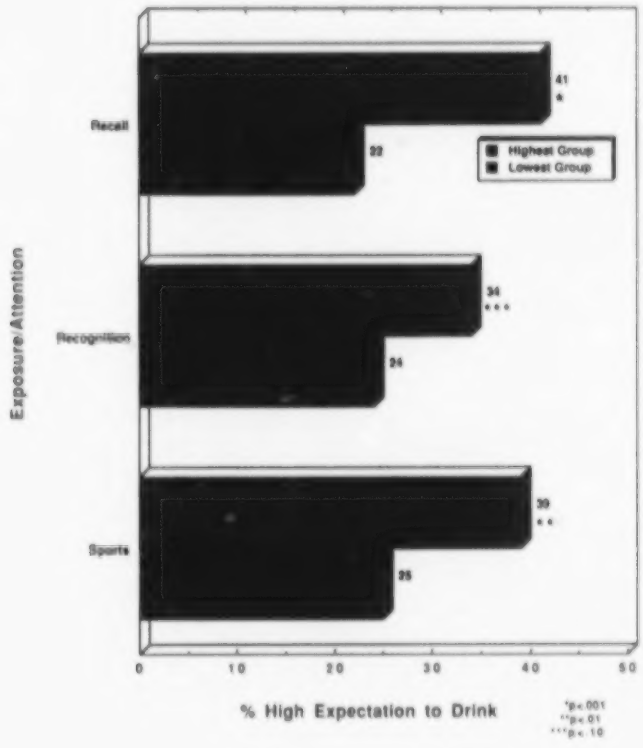
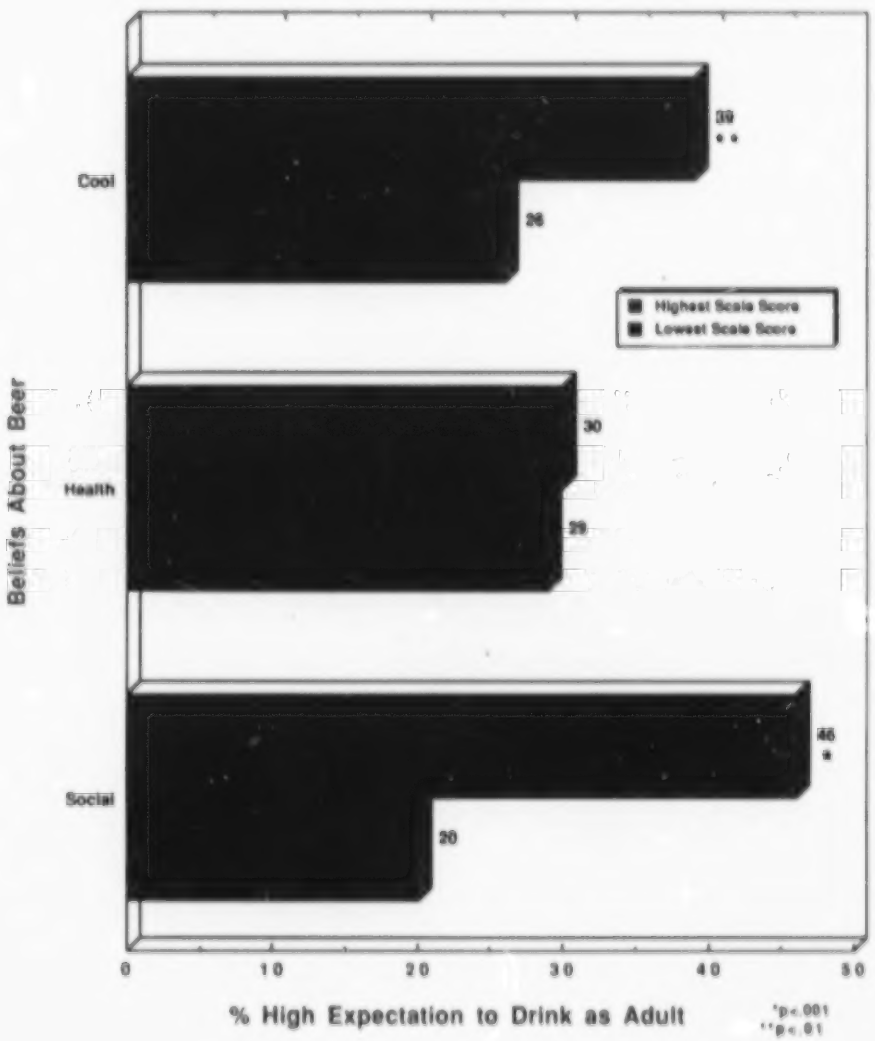


Figure 20 illustrates that 2 of the 3 belief scales are strongly associated with increased probabilities of drinking as an adult. For example, 20 percent of those scoring at the low end of the social aspects scale express a strong expectation about drinking later in life compared to 46 percent who scored at the top end of this scale. The difference on the "cool" scale is not as great though it is also statistically significant. Scores on the health belief scale showed no apparent relationship with expectations about drinking.

Figure 20
Expectation to Drink as an Adult by Belief Scales



Overall, more than two-thirds of the sample of 10-13 year olds expressed mild to strong expectations to drink when they become adults. This expectation was significantly associated with exposure to beer commercials, attention to beer commercials, and sets of beliefs about the social and "cool" aspects of beer use.

VI. Summary

The most important finding of this study is that there is a relationship among exposure and attention to beer advertising, beliefs about the social and ritual aspects of beer consumption, and expectations to drink as an adult for 10 to 13 year olds.[43] This finding can be briefly summarized as follows:

- Most children are frequently exposed to beer commercials on TV
- Children's ability to recognize commercials and recall the brands advertised is significantly related to their level of exposure through weekend viewing and, particularly, sports programming
- Children's ability to name brands of beers and match slogans with correct brands is significantly related to their exposure and attention to beer commercials
- Children are highly aware of Spuds Mackenzie, 88% of them being able to link Spuds with Bud Light
- Children's skepticism of TV beer commercials (eg. belief that ads try to get kids to drink) is significantly lower among those with the highest level of attention to the commercials
- Many children are likely to have beliefs about beer consumption that is more in line with a commercial reality (e.g., fun and good times) than a public health reality (e.g., caution and risk)
- Children's beliefs about social aspects of beer consumption and ritual aspects regarding being cool and macho are significantly related to their attention to beer commercials
- Most children have moderate to high expectations to drink as an adult; higher drinking expectations are significantly related to exposure to beer commercials, recognition of commercials, recall of the brands advertised, and beliefs about the positive social and ritual use of beer.

There were consistent and significant differences between the boys and girls in the sample:

- While boys and girls watch about the same amount to television, boys watch more sports programs, pay closer attention, and enjoy these programs more than girls.

- Boys are much more likely than girls to recognize televised beer commercials; to recall the brands being advertised; to match slogans with beer brands; and to have positive beliefs about beer consumption.

- Boys are significantly more likely to believe that beer commercials "tell the truth" while girls were more likely to believe that beer advertising "tries to get kids to drink."

- Boys are significantly more likely than girls to expected to drink when they become adults.

The key finding -- *expectation to drink as an adult is related to exposure to beer commercials, recognizing commericals, recalling the brands, and beliefs about the social and ritual uses of beer* -- is statistically significant and remarkably consistent as evidenced in a range of relationships studied. Even when the influence of important social-demographic variables such as parents' drinking, gender, and age are considered the relationship is maintained. The implications of this research is that alcohol policy-makers should assume that youth see and are influenced by beer commercials. This research should have considerable value for policy makers, educators, community activists, and the wide range of people concerned with preventing alcohol-related problems in our society.

VII. Recommendations

Alcohol is America's number 1 drug and children are widely exposed to the pervasive, attractive promotions for beer. The attention and apparent response of 10-13 year old elementary school children to beer commercials, as reported in this study, is striking and may represent the seeds of a public health

disaster by the end of this century. The argument about whether beer advertising is intentionally directed at underage youth is not relevant. The reality, ***regardless of intent,*** is that children are widely exposed to these ads, learn from them, and develop expectations about their likelihood of future drinking based, in part, on these commercials. This has serious implications for every organization, group and person concerned with the welfare of children and the prevention of alcohol-related problems.

There are three principles that should form the basis for all approaches to meeting the increased risk posed by beer advertising. First, strategies to control beer advertising should be developed in the context of a comprehensive alcohol control policy. Advertising is not the primary cause of alcohol problems in society but contributes to conditions that cultivate higher levels of consumption and subsequent morbidity and mortality. The effectiveness of advertising regulation, counter-advertising, and education about the techniques that advertisers use to manipulate the public will be enhanced to the extent that healthy public policies are developed to address alcohol issues on a broader level.

Second, the education of youth about alcohol should be the responsibility of parents, educators, prevention specialists and related public health professionals. Spuds Mackenzie should not educate kids about how to consume alcohol or, presumably, how not to drink and drive. Strategies to counter beer advertising must include increasing public health professionals' access to mass media. Right now the beer companies are the only ones who have the resources to buy the level of exposure needed to get the other side of the alcohol story told, and they won't tell it.

Third, widespread participation by community groups, professional organizations, health professionals, and community activists is essential. Changes in beer advertising will occur as more people bring their experience, skills, perspective and commitment to the issue. Because alcohol-related problems ultimately touch every member of the community and erode the basic fabric of community life, everyone has an interest in preventing these problems. Therefore, beer advertising is a community issue.

Parents, educators, treatment providers, community activists, legislators and many others can work together to reduce the potentially hazardous effect of beer commercials on young children and the larger community. Our recommendations will focus on four specific levels.

1. An action plan for parents

Parents who talk to their children about television content can have an impact on what a child learns from television. Discussing television content with a child before, during or after viewing can help clarify information seen on television. An opportunity for learning occurs when a beer commercial is on. A parent can help the child think about the commercial by posing questions such as, "What do you think the commercial is trying to say?" or "Is it realistic?" Asking questions like this can help children consciously analyze the content of the commercials without being distracted by attractive images and lively music. Discussing beer commercials can also give the parent a sense of what messages their children are getting from beer commercials.

In addition to talking to their children about beer commercials and other drug related issues, parents can develop rules about when, what, and how much their children watch television. The results from this study indicate that frequency of exposure and level of attention reinforce the misleading message

in the commercial. Limiting the amount of viewing of programs that have a high number of beer commercials can be an effective means to limit children's exposure to inaccurate messages about beer consumption.

Parents can also communicate directly with beer advertisers and urge them to be more responsible in their advertising and promotions. A single parent may not get the attention of the brewers but if parents organize a concentrated response to irresponsible advertising they will increase the potential for success.

Parents can also become more active in community efforts to regulate alcohol availability and advertising to prevent the problems that alcohol causes in the community. Alcohol is this country's number 1 drug issue and is of vital interest to every parent. Participation is essential and experience shows that it can make a difference.

2. An action plan for schools

Television teaches children with a biased perspective. Instruction on critical skills for watching television and understanding selling techniques in commercials should be integrated into all elementary schools.

Television literacy classes can create "literate" television viewers. Just as children are instructed in literacy for print media and computers, they can also be taught to "read" television content. According to Dr. Aimee Dorr, expert on children and television, children can learn two key lessons about advertising: 1) how to understand the nature of the goals and techniques of advertising; 2) how to critically evaluate advertising content and thus reduce its influence.[44]

Requiring television literacy skills instruction can interact with parents' efforts at home. For parents who do not have the time or the skill to talk to their

children about television advertising, instruction in the schools will insure that children receive the necessary information.

Teachers and school administrators can also work to insure that alcohol and other drug education curricula pay special attention to advertising issues. In addition, they can work through their professional organizations to promote more rational alcohol policies, including regulation of beer advertising.

3. An action plan for the community

Communities around the country are beginning to gain greater control over the environment through which alcoholic beverages are made available. Advertising is an important part of this environment because it promotes high levels of pro-use messages that reach children. While communities may have little impact on national media they can do several important activities at the locals level. In the last year, for example, several communities have focused on removing offensive alcohol and tobacco billboards from their neighborhoods. These activities have been successful and have illustrated new strategies that can be effectively used at the community level.

Marshall McLuhan noted that the power of ads could be defeated only when people stopped ignoring the ads and started paying serious attention to them.[45] Communities can keep the advertising issue high on the public agenda. For example, local groups can question the placement of billboards and signs at local sporting facilities and in other places where children are likely to see them on a continuing basis. Community activists, parents and others can make advertisements 'visible' and by heightening awareness motivate local legislators and decision makers to question the appropriateness of local advertising that could have an adverse effect on children.

In order to promote public discussion about advertising local community groups should cultivate relationships with local media so that alternative viewpoints can be raised. To date the media are quite willing to support the "designated driver"[46] approach but seem to have little interest in broader issues of alcohol policy such as advertising regulation and excise tax issues -- two strategies that may be especially effective in reducing alcohol-related problems among youth.

Community groups can join existing coalitions promoting progressive alcohol policies or can form new coalitions. The 1990s will likely be a time of great legislative activity at the federal level on advertising issues. Organized constituencies will be required to counter the enormous power of the alcohol lobbyists in the regulatory process.

4. An action plan for the national level

There are several excellent organizations that are actively promoting alcohol policy at the national level. The National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies, Center for Science in the Public Interest, The Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems are three of the most prominent organizations in the area of alcohol policy. Recently a new organization, the National Coalition to Prevent Impaired Driving, was started. This group is working for implementation of the recommendations from the Surgeon General's Workshop (see below). Working with these groups is an important step in making sure that alcohol policy issues are taken seriously by our Congressional Representatives and Senators.

In 1989 then Surgeon General C. Everett Koop released a comprehensive set of recommendations that had been developed by a group of more than 100 experts at the Surgeon General's Workshop on Drunk Driving

held in December 1988[47,48]. The recommendations regarding advertising and marketing represent an excellent starting point for federal action on this important public health issue. Some of these recommendations were:

- Match the level of alcohol advertising with equivalent exposure for health and safety messages to provide more complete and accurate information about alcohol issues.

- Require warning labels be clearly and conspicuously placed in all alcohol advertising.

- Eliminate tax deductions for alcohol advertising and promotion other than price and product advertising.

- Eliminate alcohol advertising and promotion that portray activities that can be dangerous when combined with alcohol use.

- Eliminate the use of celebrities who have a strong appeal to youth in advertising and promotion.

- Eliminate alcohol advertising, and promotion and sponsorship of public events (e.g., musical concerts, athletic contests), where the majority of the anticipated audience is under the legal drinking age.

These recommendations, along with the many others made by the Surgeon General Koop, represent a blueprint for alcohol policy in the 1990s. Effectively addressing alcohol advertising, particularly beer commercials, will not eliminate alcohol-related problems. However, any effort to develop alcohol policy that ignores the very real problems posed by advertising will be of only limited value.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study add to the body of knowledge regarding the potential hazards of beer commercials for youth. The bottom line is that young children are widely exposed to and influenced by beer commercials on television. This influence can be seen in the types of beliefs children have about beer consumption and their own expectations about drinking when they

become adults. As this population moves into the teen years the potential for early death related to alcohol is significant. Beer commercials certainly do not reduce this risk and may increase it.

Science, education, healthy public policy and community activism all will be required to insure that the children of America gain the type of knowledge necessary to understand the place of beer and other drugs in our society. Ultimately the argument over advertising will not be settled by scientific studies or emotional charges. The course of action will be developed through increased public discussion, greater citizen involvement, and increased access by the community to mass media.

FOOTNOTES

[1]1988 Report on Television. New York: Neilson Company, 1989.

[2]Comstock, G. The Evolution of American Television, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989.

[3]Meyrowitz, J. No Sense of Place, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

[4]Postman, N., Nystrom, C., Strate, L. and Weingartner, C. Myths, Men, & Beer: An analysis of beer commercials on broadcast television, 1987. Falls Church, VA: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 1988.

[5]Coate, D. and Grossman, M., "Change in Alcoholic Beverage Prices and Legal Drinking Ages: Effects on Youth Alcohol Use and Motor Vehicle Mortality," Alcohol Health and Research World, 12(1):22-25, 59, 1987.

[6]U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, News Release, February 13, 1990.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Johnston, L., O'Malley, P., and Bachman, J. Illicit Drug Use, Smoking and Drinking by America's High School Students, College Students and Young Adults, 1975-1987. National Institute on Drug Abuse, USDHHS, Public Health Service, 1988, p. 88.

[9]"Results from the National Adolescent Student Health Survey," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 38(9): 147-150, March 10, 1990.

[10]Bowen, O. "Opening Remarks," in: Surgeon General's Workshop on Drunk Driving, Proceedings, USDHHS, Public Health Service, 1989.

[11]Koop, E. "Opening Remarks," in: Surgeon General's Workshop on Drunk Driving, Proceedings, USDHHS, Public Health Service, 1989.

[12]Baudot, B. International Advertising Handbook, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989.

[13]Wallack, L. "The Prevention of Alcohol-Related Problems: Health Educators and the 'New Generation' of Strategies," International Journal of Health Education, 4(2):199-224, 1984.

[14]This estimate is for 1983, see: Weinberg, R. and Associates. "Advertising and Malt Beverage Demand: A Macro Analysis of the Brewing Industry Advertising Expenditures 1947-1983," A Briefing Paper for the Ad Ban Task Force, Anheuser-Busch, Inc., St. Louis, Missouri, 1984.

[15]"Alcohol is Linked to Deaths," New York Times, (National Edition), March 27, 1990, p. B9.

[16]Atkin, C. and Block, M. Content and Effects of Alcohol Advertising. Prepared for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Pub. No. PB-82-123142. Springfield, VA: National Technical Information Service, 1981.

[17]Center for Science in the Public Interest, News Release, April 4, 1990.

[18]Gibson, R. and Freedman, A. "Bud Puts Stress on Promotions, Trims TV Ads," The Wall Street Journal, February 21, 1990, p. B1,6.

[19]Johnson, W. "Sports and Suds," Sports Illustrated, pp. 69-82, August 8, 1988.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]"College Beer Marketing Under Fire," Market Watch, pp. 45-49, July/August, 1985.

[25]Adweek's Marketing Week, p. 8, January 9, 1989.

[26]"College Beer Marketing Under Fire," Market Watch, p. 47, July/August, 1985.

[27]Breed, W., Wallack, L. and Grube, J., "Alcohol Advertising in College Newspapers: A 7 year follow-up," Journal of American College Health 38(6):255-262, 1990.

[28]Jacobson, M., Hacker, G., and Atkins, R. The Booze Merchants: The Inebriating of America, Washington, DC: CSPI Books, 1983.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Jacobson, M. "Hey Teens! This Ad's for You," Nutrition Action Healthletter, p. 8, September 1989.

[31]Dorr, A. Television and Children: A Special Medium for a Special Audience. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1986.

[32]Atkin, C., Hocking, J., and Block, M. "Teenage Drinking: Does advertising Make a Difference?," Journal of Communication, 34, pp. 157-167, 1984.

[33]Atkin, C., Neuendorf, K., and Mc Dermott, S. "The Role of Alcohol Advertising in Excessive and Hazardous Drinking," Journal of Drug Education, 13(4):313-325, 1983.

[34]Atkin, C. and Block, M. Content and Effects of Alcohol Advertising, Report 5: Correlational Field Survey, Report submitted to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Federal Trade Commission, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and Department of Transportation, November 1979.

[35]Atkin, C., "Mass Communication Effects on Drinking and Driving," pp. 15-34 in: The Surgeon General's Workshop on Drunk Driving, Background Papers, USDHHS, Public Health Service, 1989.

[36]Strickland, D. "Advertising Exposure, Alcohol Consumption and Misuse of Alcohol," pp. 201-222 in: M. Grant, M. Plant, and A. Williams (eds.), Economics and Alcohol: Consumption and Controls, New York, NY: Gardner Press, Inc. 1983.

[37]Neuendorf, K. "Alcohol Advertising and Media Portrayals," Journal of the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies, 10, pp. 67-78, 1985.

[38]Aitkin, P., Eadie, D., Leather, D., McNeill, R., and Scott, A. "Television Advertisements for Alcoholic Drinks do Reinforce Underage Drinking," British Journal of Addiction 83: 1399-1419, 1988.

[39]Op cit.

[40]Health Education Communication Consultants, "Children and Television Study: Focus Group Study Report," Menlo Park, CA, 1990.

[41]Unpublished data from the 1989, "Alcohol on Television Monitoring Study" conducted by the Prevention Research Center, Berkeley, California

[42]A fourth category included two items: "This is always beer at a really good party" and "People who drink beer have more friends that people who don't drink beer" clustered together but were not used because of low reliability. The individual responses to these items were quite interesting -- 40% believe the first item is true and 14% believe the second item is true.

[43]The general model shown in Figure 1 hypothesizes a straightforward relationship between exposure to commercials, attention to the commercials, development of beliefs about beer consumption, and expectation to drink as an adult. Overall, the data reflect a strong consistency with this model. Although strict causal interpretations cannot be made, there are statistical techniques that control for other variables and thus eliminate some obvious alternative explantions. In the present case, in order to assess the effects of other variables that were not included in the model, a regression analysis was conducted controlling for other potentially important factors as parents' drinking, friends drinking, age, and ethnicity/race.

The results of the regression analysis confirm the findings reported in the body of this report. Even when other potentially important socio-demographic and family variables are considered exposure to commercials is directly related to attention, to more positive beliefs about beer, and expectation to drink as an adult. The more technical statistical analysis of these findings will be published separately.

[44]Dorr, A. Television and Children: A special medium for a special audience. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1986.

[45]Marchand, P. Marshall McLuhan. New York:Ticknor & Fields, 1989.

[46]The designated driver approach is supported by the beer industry as well as the broadcast industry. The appropriateness of this approach is increasingly being questioned by prevention specialists and public health professionals. The approach tends to focus on the drinking of only one person potentially freeing others to drink to excess. Any potential impact on drinking driving problems may well be overcome by other problems associated with heavier drinking such as domestic and other violence, injuries, lost time from work, and longer term chronic health problems. The "designated driver" approach is useful as part of a comprehensive approach to prevention. However, when used instead of, rather than in addition to, broader social policy approaches its value is limited and could be counterproductive.

[47]The Surgeon General's Workshop on Drunk Driving, Background Papers, USDHHS, Public Health Service, 1989.

[48]Surgeon General's Workshop on Drunk Driving, Proceedings, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, 1989.

APPENDIX 1

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

The purpose of this study is to increase understanding of the influence of beer advertising on children. The overall design used two basic methods to gather information from children. First, a survey of a scientifically selected sample of school children was conducted during the spring and summer of 1989. Second, a series of focus groups were conducted with 8 groups of school children. All of the children interviewed were in the 5th or 6th grades and between the ages of 10 and 13 years old.

The survey part of this study was embedded in a much larger study being conducted by the Prevention Research Center (PRC), Berkeley, California under the direction of Dr. Joel Grube. The purpose of the PRC study is to assess the relationship between television viewing and drinking behavior over a three year span.

The survey

The survey was developed to assess the relationship of exposure to alcoholic beverage advertising and a number of outcome measures. These included the ability to recognize and recall beer commercials, beliefs about the social and health effects of beer, and expectation about drinking as an adult.

The present survey of school children aged 10-13 is unique in several ways. First, most scientifically designed surveys do not interview children under the age of 12. The usual age grouping is 12 to 17 years of age. Second, surveys of school children usually take place in a classroom setting and are "paper and pencil" tests which are self-administered. Interviews conducted as part of this survey were administered by trained interviewers and took place in the child's home. Third, the larger PRC study also interviewed one peer

nominated by each child and the parent of the primary interviewee. This provides extensive possibilities for future analysis.

Surveys are a useful tool for getting a general sense of what people are thinking. However, surveys have significant limitations in obtaining detailed responses from people or responses reflecting feelings about complex issues. Nonetheless, surveys do generate valuable information, have results that are generalizable to similar populations, point to new research areas, and can fruitfully inform public policy decisions.

There are special problems when surveys are conducted with such a young population. Various concepts and language have to be consistent with the developmental stage of the child. The age group we surveyed is in a state of transition which provides the possibility of intragroup developmental differences. Wording of questions is very crucial to make sure each question clearly communicates to the child. In addition, the relatively short attention span of this age group necessitated brief, uncomplicated questions.

Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire went through an extensive development process that included a review of the relevant literature, the generation of questions, review by expert advisors, pretesting with those similar to the target group, debriefing with interviewers and revision. Four pretests were conducted followed by a larger scale pilot test. The pilot test provided clear estimates of comprehension of questions and time required to administer the questionnaire. A final revision was made to ensure the survey did not exceed the available time.

The final questionnaire developed for this study included measures of television watching on weekends and during primetime hours, exposure to programs with heavy concentrations of beer commercials, awareness of

slogans and brands of beer, recognition of television advertisements, and beliefs regarding various aspects of drinking beer.

The larger study being conducted by the Prevention Research Center included many more questions regarding specific television programs watched, parental attitudes and drinking behavior, attitudes and drinking behavior of the child's peer, and the child's attitudes toward drinking, school and church as well as their own drinking behavior, and the child's expectation of drinking as an adult. The average administration time of the AAA segment of the questionnaire was approximately 10-12 minutes.

Interviewer Training

The interviews were conducted by the Survey Research Center, University of California, Berkeley. All interviewers participated in at least 40 hours of training. This included general orientation about interviewing, briefing on the survey for this particular study, practice interviews with children not in our sample, and debriefing with supervisors. Interviewers were instructed to assume a neutral position on issues covered in the survey instrument. All interviewers were provided with a written set of instructions that included answers to commonly asked questions by those being interviewed.

Sample Selection

The survey was administered to a scientifically selected group of students from a school district in Northern California. Every fifth student in the 5^{th} and 6^{th} grades was selected with each student having an equal probability of being selected. A total of 628 students were included in the initial sample. Of these 603 were eligible to be interviewed and 468 interviews were completed. This represented a conservatively calculated completion rate of 78%. Reasons for non-participation included language problems (8), could not be located (28), never at home (1), and families refused to participate (98).

The final sample included 239 girls (51%) and 229 boys (49%). Figure A1 indicated that the great majority of the students were either 11(42%) or 12 years old (43%). The sample reflects considerable racial/ethnic diversity and income levels. Figure A2 shows that 35% of the families surveyed reported total income of less than $30,000 while 29% had income totalling $50,000. or more. In terms of race and ethnicity, it can be seen in Figure A3 that the sample was quite diverse. For example, one-third of the children were White and the combined group of Asians, Pacific Islanders and Filipinos made up another 31%.

Figure A1
Age Distribution

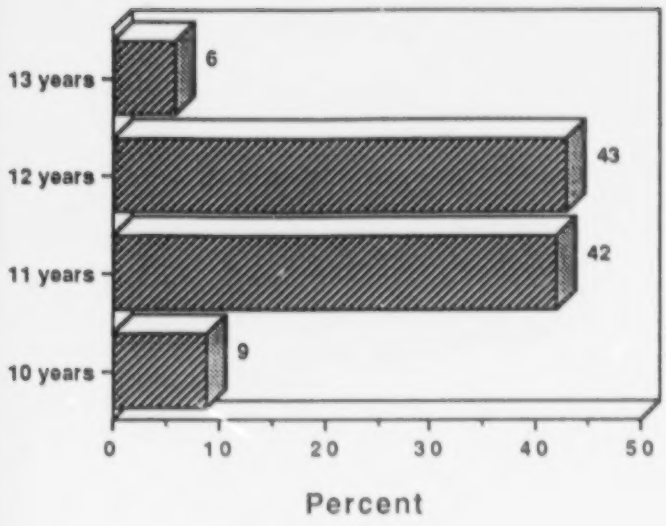


Figure A2
Family Income Distribution

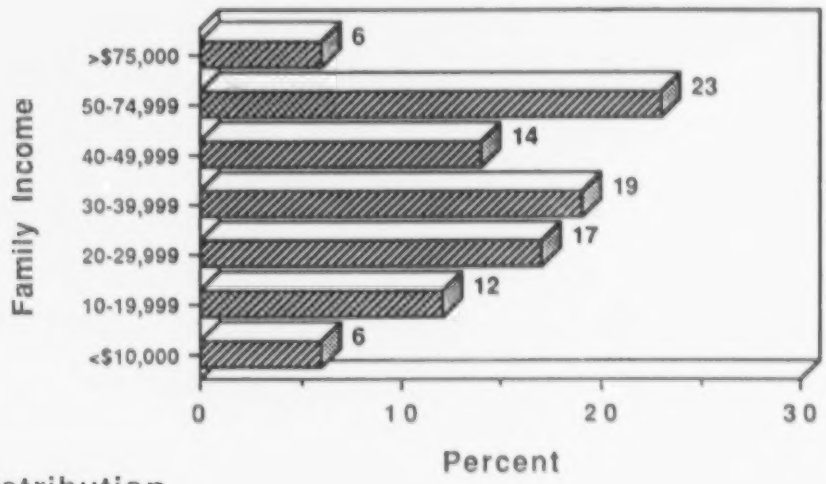
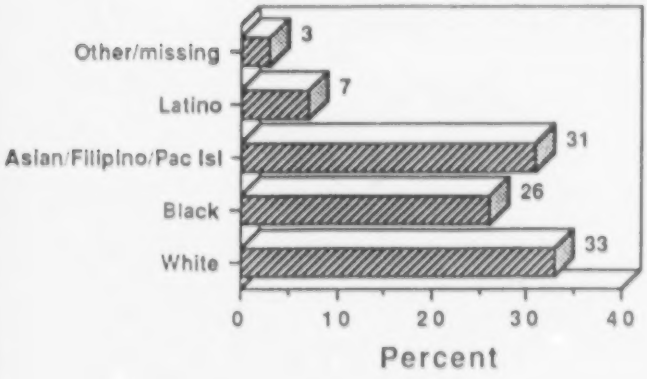


Figure A3
Race/Ethnic Distribution



APPENDIX 2
Selected Sections of the Questionnaire

(This study was part of a larger research project and only sections of the questionnaire directly relevant are presented here.)

1. My first question is -- do you ever watch television?

   Yes, sometimes..... 1

   No, never..... (SKIP TO PAGE 18)..2

2. How about yesterday? Please take a minute and try to remember all the programs you watched yesterday. About how many hours did you spend watching TV all together yesterday?

   About _____ hours yesterday

   CIRCLE DAY OF WEEK REFERRED TO:

   Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun

3. A. On a typical school day (Monday through Friday), about how many hours do you watch television before you go to school?

   About _____ hours before school

   B. How about from after school until you eat dinner -- about how many hours do you watch then?

   About _____ hours from after school until dinner

   C. And how about from dinnertime until you go to bed on the average school day? About how many hours do you watch then?

   About _____ hours from dinnertime until you go to bed

4. A. How about Saturday morning -- about how many hours of television do you watch most Saturday mornings before noon?

   About _____ hours on Saturday morning

   B. And what about on Saturdays from noon until you go to bed?

   About _____ hours on Saturday afternoon and evening

5. A. How about Sunday morning -- about how many hours of television do you watch most Sunday mornings before noon?

   About _____ hours on Sunday morning

   B. And what about on Sundays from noon until you go to bed?

   About _____ hours on Sunday afternoon and evening

8. A. How many sports events, if any, like football, basketball, or baseball games have you watched most of the way through on TV in the last 4 weeks – none, 1, 2, or 3 or more? (This time we want the actual number.)

None.....(SKIP TO NEXT PAGE) 1

1..... 2

2..... 3

3 or more 4

B. In general, of the sports events you watch most on TV, how much attention do you usually pay? (You'll find the answers to these at the top of page 1.)

Pay close attention, not miss anything..... 1

Watch pretty carefully, but miss a little..... 2

Concentrate more on other things and watch out of the corner of your eye 3

C. In general, how much do you like watching sports events on TV – do you like them a lot, like them, like them a little, or don't really like them?

Like them a lot 1

Like them 2

Like them a little..... 3

Don't really like them..... 4

9. Now I'll read some things different people have said, and I'd like to know how you feel about each one. Please turn to page 2 in the booklet and tell me which answer on that page best describes the way you feel about each statement.

How about (EACH)? (IF NECESSARY, READ SELECTIVELY: Is that a lot like you, a little like you, or not at all like you?)

		A lot like me	A little like me	Not at all like me
A.	I often learn things by watching TV.....	1	2	3
B.	Watching TV is one of my favorite things to do.....	1	2	3
C.	Most TV I watch is boring.....	1	2	3
D.	If I could never watch TV I would be very unhappy.....	1	2	3
E.	I usually pay close attention to beer commercials on TV.....	1	2	3
F.	I usually pay close attention to other kinds of television commercials.....	1	2	3

10. We're interested in whether people know the brand names of beers. Can you name any brands of beer? (What other brands of beer can you name?)

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

11. We're also interested in knowing if people remember the different slogans or sayings from television commercials. Please turn to page 3 in the booklet and as I read the following slogans tell me the letter of the drink you think this slogan belongs to. This isn't a test, so if you have no idea about one, don't worry; we'll move on to the next one. Let's look at the example at the top of page 3. "Good time, great taste" is a slogan used by McDonald's, so you'd answer "B" in that case. Let's begin with (READ EACH). (Which of the nine brands on the bottom of page 3 use that slogan? Just give me the letter.)

1. It's the real thing.	(_____)	A. Bud Light (Budweiser)
2. Spuds Mackenzie, the original party animal.	(_____)	B. Miller Lite
3. Made the American way.	(_____)	C. Michelob
4. An American original.	(_____)	D. Miller
5. It doesn't get any better.	(_____)	E. (Pepsi) Pepsi-Cola
6. Tastes great, less filling.	(_____)	F. Old Milwaukee
		G. Stroh's
		H. (Coke) Coca-Cola
		I. Coors

12. A. Now we'd like you to take a quick look at each of 7 photographs from television commercials. As I show you each one, please tell me whether you definitely remember seeing the commercial, are pretty sure you did not see it, or whether it's one you may or may not have seen. How about (EACH) -- do you remember ever seeing it? SHOW PHOTOS IN SEQUENCE, CIRCLING ONE CODE FOR EACH. SHOW ALL 7 PHOTOS BEFORE ASKING B ABOUT ANY.

IF NO TO ALL ITEMS, SKIP TO NEXT PAGE.

B. Now let's look at the ones you think you may have seen before. ASK FOR EACH PHOTO CODED "1" OR "2" IN A: Do you remember the brand name of the product this one was advertising? (IF YES: Which brand do you think they were advertising with this?) CIRCLE ONE CODE FOR EACH.

Commercial No.	Brand name being advertised (DO NOT REVEAL TO R)	A. Seen or not seen?			B. Brand name advertised?		
		Yes, I saw it	Not sure, may or may not have	No, did not see	Yes, and gave correct brand	Yes, but gave wrong brand	Don't remember brand
1	Coors Light	1	2	3	1	2	3
2	PSA for Designated Drivers	1	2	3	1	2	3
3	Bud Light	1	2	3	1	2	3
4	Coors	1	2	3	1	2	3
5	Michelob Dry	1	2	3	1	2	3
6	Budweiser	1	2	3	1	2	3
7	Diet Coke	1	2	3	1	2	3

13. Here are a few statements about beer commercials. For each one, please tell me whether you are absolutely sure it's true, whether you think this might be true, think this might be false, or whether you're absolutely sure it's false. Please turn to page 4 in the booklet.

	Absolutely sure this is true	Think this might be true	Think this might be false	Absolutely sure this is false	I have no idea
A. Beer commercials on television tell the truth.	1	2	3	4	5
B. Beer commercials make drinking seem better than it really is	1	2	3	4	5
C. Beer advertising tries to get kids to drink.	1	2	3	4	5

14. (Now let's talk about some other things.) We're interested in what you think about drinking alcohol and about people who drink it in real life. For each statement, please tell me whether you are absolutely sure it's true, whether you think this might be true, whether you think this might be false, or whether you're absolutely sure it's false. These are (also) on page 4.

	Absolutely sure this is true	Think this might be true	Think this might be false	Absolutely sure this is false	I have no idea
A. People who drink beer have more fun than people who don't drink beer	1	2	3	4	5
B. Drinking alcoholic beverages may cause health problems	1	2	3	4	5
C. People who drink beer have more friends than people who don't drink beer	1	2	3	4	5
D. It is very dangerous to drive after having 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks.	1	2	3	4	5
E. There is always beer at a really good party	1	2	3	4	5
F. Bars are a good place for grown-ups to hang out with friends	1	2	3	4	5
G. Drinking beer is an important part of life in America	1	2	3	4	5
H. If a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, it can hurt her unborn baby	1	2	3	4	5
I. Having a beer is a nice reward after a hard day's work	1	2	3	4	5
J. It's easier for people to get to know each other after they've had a few beers.	1	2	3	4	5
K. Drinking beer is a sign that a boy has become a man	1	2	3	4	5
L. It is perfectly safe to use power tools after having 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks	1	2	3	4	5
M. Drinking beer makes life more exciting	1	2	3	4	5

		Absolutely sure this is true	Think this might be true	Think this might be false	Absolutely sure this is false	I have no idea
N.	Driving home from a bar after a person has had 2 or 3 beers is o.k.	1	2	3	4	5
O.	It's definitely cool to drink beer.	1	2	3	4	5
P.	Drinking beer is a good way to relax.	1	2	3	4	5
Q.	Drinking beer together is a way that men show they are good friends	1	2	3	4	5
R.	Drinking a lot and then driving a car is a good way to show that you are tough	1	2	3	4	5
S.	If a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, it can cause birth defects	1	2	3	4	5
T.	Beer is more like soda than it is like liquor	1	2	3	4	5
U.	Wine coolers are more like fruit juice than they are like liquor	1	2	3	4	5
V.	People should not get into a car if the driver has had 2 or 3 beers	1	2	3	4	5

15. Now, a more general question. If a person drives after drinking, which of the following beverages is most likely to cause a traffic crash. Is it wine coolers, wine, beer, liquor, or are they all equally likely to cause a crash?

Wine Coolers 1

Wine 2

Beer 3

Liquor 4

All of these are equally likely 5

Other...(SPECIFY:_____)..6

25. Now we'd like you to think about when you're an adult and try to imagine what you probably will and won't do. PLEASE CHECK ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LETTER.

	Will probably do this at least once a week (1)	Will probably do this, but less than once a week (2)	Probably will not do this at all (3)	Definitely will not do this at all (4)
A. Drink beer	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
B. Drink wine cooler	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
C. Drink wine	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
D. Drink hard liquor	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Appendix 3
Focus Group Study:
Summary of Methods and Results

Introduction

A series discussion groups were conducted with 5th and 6th graders to better understand how children interpret beer commercials. The focus group discussions also provide a context for interpreting the survey results. The findings from these focus groups have been reported elsewhere[1] and are summarized here.

Discussion groups were chosen as an additional research method for this study because they are a flexible and sensitive way to gather more detailed information from respondents. In the discussion groups, children used their own words to describe their thoughts and feelings about beer commercials.

Methods

Eight groups of 6 to 10 children watched video taped beer commercials and participated in open ended discussions led by a professional facilitator. In this informal atmosphere, children shared their opinions about the commercials: what they liked and didn't like, what they thought the main messages were in the commercials, and their spontaneous comments and observations.

Children watched and discussed the following five commercials video taped during weekend daytime programming aired on network television. The commercials were taped in the spring of 1989 and discussion groups were held in the fall of the same year.

[1]Health Education Communication Consultants, "Children and Television Study: Focus Group Study Report," Menlo Park, CA, 1990.

1. Coors: "Crested Butte"

This advertisement for Coors is set in Crested Butte, Colorado, and depicts numerous brief scenes of men (and a few women) engaged in Western-style activities: riding a bull, flipping on a snowboard, fishing, sitting around a campfire, socializing in a bar. The announcer proclaims that the beer is an "American original" and "it takes a part of this country as cold and clean as the Rockies to brew a beer as pure and natural as Coors."

2. Old Milwaukee: "Landsailing"

This 10-second documentary-style advertisement shows men landsailing at high speed on the dry lakes of Black Rock, Nevada and drinking Old Milwaukee beer together afterwards. As several women in the background bring cold beer to the men, the announcer says, "It doesn't get any better than this."

3. Budweiser: "Bud to the Beach"

Budweiser beer cans come alive in this animated commercial depicting can-people engaged in numerous beach activities: sunbathing, lifeguarding, burying each other with sand, and surfing. Beach Boys-style music plays in the background, and the cans speak to each other in surfer language, such as "Cowabunga, Brew-Doggie". Several can-people are involved in a surf-off, during which they are swamped by a big wave and resolve to arm-wrestle next time. At the end of the commercial, free sunglasses are offered to those who show proof of purchase of Budweiser or Bud Light.

4. Miller Genuine Draft: "I Put a Spell on You"

In this rock video influenced commercial, a mysterious stranger enters a roadside diner on a hot summer day and asks for Miller Genuine Draft. His face is never shown, but power and magic surround him: the juke box starts to play when he passes it, lights come on, and it starts to snow inside the cafe, cooling

everyone off. The waitress and other customers watch the stranger, spell bound. He takes all of the power with him when he leaves -- the music and lights shut off, and it stops snowing.

5. Budweiser: "For Reaching Deep"

This Budweiser commercial is a montage of athletic moments that are often humorous -- a football player and a referee disagreeing, hockey players colliding, baseball players missing the ball, etc. It opens with a beautiful woman poised on a diving board who later dives into a pool with a large Budweiser label painted on bottom of the pool. The lyrics to the pulsing Budweiser song say that this beer is for "reaching deep, digging in when things go wrong, pushing hard in all you do. This Bud's for you!"

Results

Overall, the results from the survey were confirmed by the findings in discussion groups with children: 10-13 year old children see and remember beer commercials. In addition, children are aware of the health consequences of drinking and driving and other high risk activities. They are also aware that commercials link beer drinking to fun, friends and other positive attributes. As in the survey, there were differences between the responses of boys and girls. Boys are more familiar with commercials, pay more attention to them and seem to enjoy them more than girls.

Children's skepticism toward beer commercials should be considered in light of the developmental stage of the participants. Morally, children in the age group of this study tend to see things in black and white. Several children had trouble separating their dislike for beer from their opinions about the commercials. Most children felt that drinking was morally wrong. Yet that will change as children grow older and begin to make moral decisions in a less

rigid fashion. For example, in the Scottish study[2] of children aged 12-17, they found that younger children took a strong moralistic stand against drinking alcoholic beverages, while the older children did not.

Children have a high awareness of beer commercials. When asked whether they had seen these commercials in the past, nearly all of the children in the discussion groups reported they had previously seen the commercials. Their familiarity with the commercials was evidenced by their singing along with songs on the commercials. The Budweiser "For reaching deep" theme was most popular and boys in all groups spontaneously sung along with the commercial. Some groups of boys also sang along with the theme songs for the Coors and Old Milwaukee commercials. This did not occur in any of the groups with girls.

In the process of discussion, some children brought up other beer commercials without prompting from the facilitator. Children either commented to another child or to the facilitator when they were watching the video taped commercials and were reminded of others they had seen. These comments about other commercials came up in the discussions:

"Have you seen the one with Randy Cross when he bends down?"

"Have you seen that commercial where its in the dessert and everything is dry and then its wet?"

"Have you seen that Spuds one where he's flying through the air?"

"You know that one with Paul Hogan where the glass is full and then it's empty?"

[2]Aitkin, P., Eadie, D., Leather, D., McNeill, R., and Scott, A. "Television Advertisements for Alcoholic Drinks do Reinforce Underage Drinking," British Journal of Addiction 83: 1399-1419, 1988.

This occurred in four of the eight groups and more frequently with boys. This suggests that children see and remember beer commercials enough to discuss them some time after seeing them on television.

Children preferred certain commercials over others. At the end of each discussion group, children were asked to vote on their favorite ad. Of the five commercials, all groups consistently rated the Old Milwaukee ad the least interesting. Budweiser ads were by far the favorites. Here are the results:

1. Bud to the Beach (Budweiser) 45%
2. For Reaching Deep (Budweiser) 39%
3. Crested Butte (Coors) 10%
4. I Put a Spell on You (Miller) 6%
5. Land Sailing (Old Milwaukee) 0

Children didn't like the lowest rated ads because the Old Milwaukee ad, according to one child, is "boring, nothing happens." The people in the ad were described as "nothing" and "boring, like people who watch football on TV." The Miller ad was often met with disbelief. As one child said of the snow inside the roadside diner: "That would never happen in real life." This age group may be too young to find the sex appeal and MTV-like visuals in this commercial interesting.

Children also liked certain characteristics in commercials. After viewing each commercial, the facilitator asked what the children liked about the commercial. The responses were similar across groups.

Advertisement	*Reason for Preference*
Bud to the Beach	Surfing, funny, surfer and waves, cute cans, comedy, animated, surfer slang, special offer.
For Reaching...	Funny, song, realistic, variety, horses, diver, football scene.
Crested Butte	Dog, scenery, beer looked refreshing, snow-boarding.
I Put a Spell..	Music, snow from beer, jukebox turning on.
Land Sailing	Land sailing machines.

Humorous ads were by far the most popular in this age group. Physical humor such as a surfer wipe out in "Bud to the Beach" and players running into each other in "For Reaching Deep" were greeted with laughter and moans of sympathy. Fast paced, catchy music was also popular among the children, and again "For Reaching Deep" won in the best song category: most boys knew the lyrics and sang along.

Animals were also popular. A howling dog is in the very brief opening shot of "Crested Butte," yet children in all groups mentioned the dog before they mentioned the song, pictures of the rodeo or anything else. Finally, the animation in Bud to the Beach was especially attractive -- much more so than the rock video style of "I Put a Spell on You."

Children were adept at discerning the "hidden messages" in beer commercials. All children were aware that the intent of each commercial was to sell beer. Most children noted that the commercials linked the beer to a lifestyle or a quality. There was considerable skepticism about the promises that beer commercials make about the popularity, fun and good times to be had if you buy their brand of beer. When asked about the main message of the commercial, various children responded:

"It'll make you feel like you're in the mountains."

"If you drink this beer you'll be like a surfer."

"If you buy the beer we'll give you a gift for buying it."

"If you drink this beer you'll be all relaxed and macho."

"Buy the beer."

"If you drink this beer you'll be really cool and everything."

"People who play sports should drink beer."

"Budweiser is like conning people to buy it by giving glasses, cheap glasses."

"They are tricking you to buy beer."

In addition, children were aware that dangerous activities were portrayed in beer commercials. Without being prompted, children noted the danger of drinking and swimming (implied in "Bud to the Beach"), operating fast moving vehicles (as in "Landsailing), and sports activities (such as bull riding and snowboarding in "Crested Butte").

It is not clear whether the ability to see the "hidden messages" in commercials protects children from the allure of the commercials. Children's skepticism about the content of the commercials contrasted sharply with their enjoyment of the commercials as they watched. Throughout each group, children attended closely to each commercial, laughed at the jokes and sang along when they knew the words. Although ridiculing the ads publicly and condemning beer generally, children enjoyed the commercials.

Boys and girls liked the same commercials and liked basically the same characteristics in commercials (i.e. humor, animals, etc.). There are, however, two main differences that emerged. Boys were more familiar with the commercials than girls, and were more likely to bring up other commercials not shown in the discussion groups. Boys also paid more attention than girls as

they watched the commercials and were more involved as they watched. As already stated, only boys knew the lyrics to some of the theme songs and actively and enthusiastically sang along. Girls were better able to identify sex role stereotyping than the boys. Boys in one group noted that the women serving beer at the end of "Landsailing" were not actively participating in the sport but were merely "beer slaves". However, there were few comments on the sex roles portrayed by men in the commercials. Girls gave detailed descriptions of the passive role that women played in the commercials. Yet like the boys, they did not comment on sex role stereo typing for men.

Conclusion

The discussion groups added to our understanding of children and beer commercials. First, humor, animals, animation and music are the characterisitics in commercials that children at this age prefer. These characteristics are commonly seen in commercials targetted to children, such as ads for breakfast cereals and toys. They may not be appropriate in commercials intended for an exclusively adult audience. Second, children are not necessarily protected from the messages in beer commercials by their skepticism. There was a contradiction between the children's enjoyment of the commercials and their ability to identify messages about lifestyle and risk.